

2008 ANNUAL REPORT



OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



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Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

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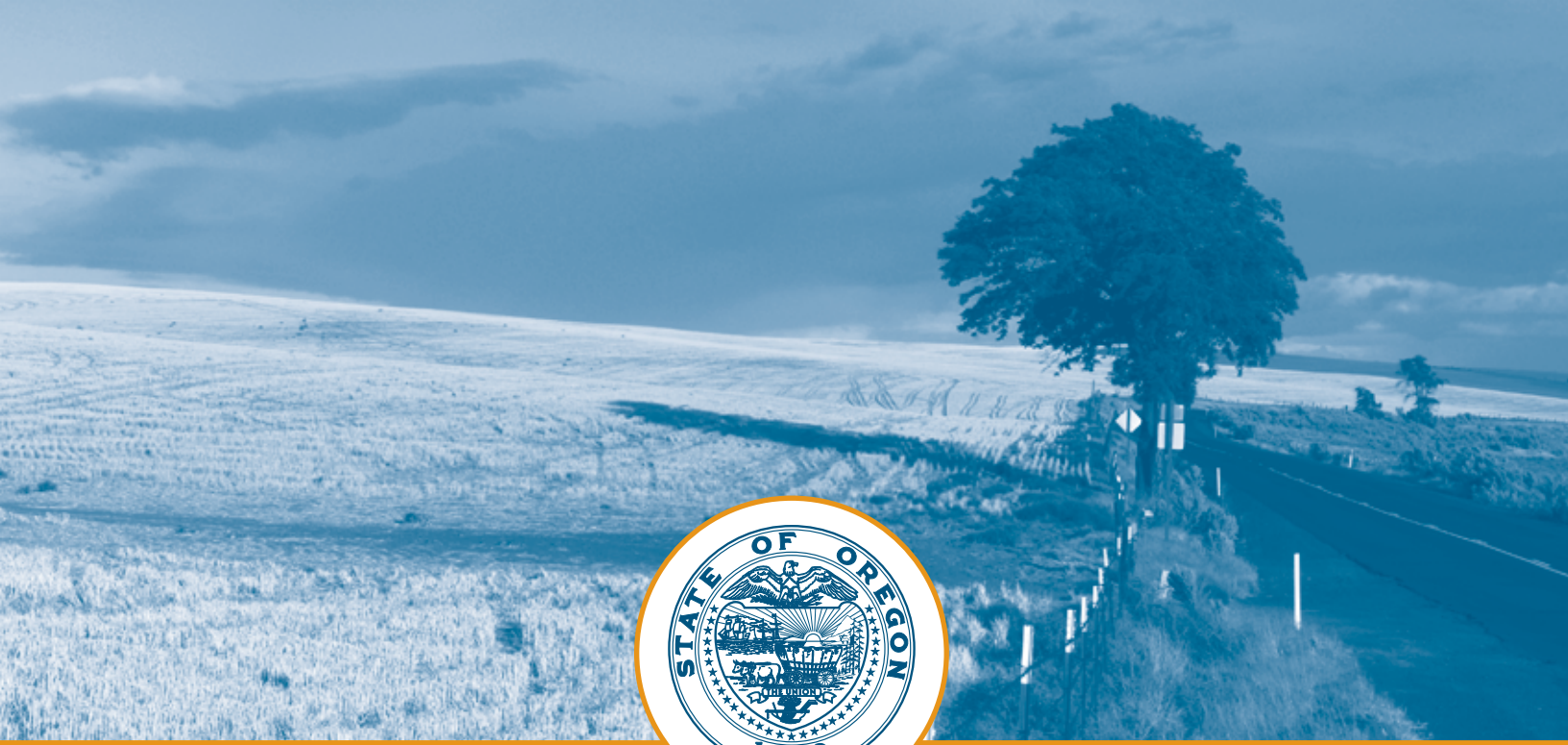
December 2008

Honorable Governor Ted Kulongoski and Dr. Edward Anthony, RSA Deputy Commissioner:

On behalf of the members of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am honored to present the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council 2008 Annual Report. In this report you will find an account of the status of the Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services program (OVRs) and a summary of the activities undertaken by the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council during this past year.

SRC members continue to support the right of Oregonians with disabilities to obtain and maintain meaningful employment. The council maintains a strong focus on positive employment outcomes for consumers with disabilities. The data below indicate the effectiveness of the services provided by OVRs staff for the past year.

During Federal Fiscal Year 2008, 16,447 persons with disabilities received services. Of these, 94 percent had significant disabilities, and 2,604 completed Individual Plans for Employment and were successfully rehabilitated. The impact of these consumers being able to obtain and maintain meaningful work translated into approximately \$3.9 million in new wages, providing a substantial contribution to the Oregon economy. We would not achieve these accomplishments without the dedication of the OVRs staff members who work diligently to provide quality and timely services to Oregonians with disabilities.



These accomplishments are the result of hard work by those who provided services through careful assessment, individualized employment planning, other services and supports; and by the individuals with disabilities who strived to attain these results.

The Executive Committee continues to work with OVRS on major program and policy issues. The more significant of those includes Order of Selection, completion of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, partnering with OVRS on a Needs Assessment, National SRC Coalition, an accounting issue noted in the federal RSA audit of February 2008 and the placement of OVRS within DHS or somewhere else in Oregon state government. The SRC Executive Committee continues to advocate with the director of DHS, Bruce Goldberg, M.D., regarding OVRS placement, accomplishments and budget.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as chair of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council. The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council members take their advocacy role seriously and are honored to provide leadership and to work in partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Sincerely,
Jesse J. Kappel
SRC Chair

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COUNCIL PURPOSE

The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC gives advice to and works in partnership with the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services program. The council provides OVRS an external consumer-oriented perspective when discussing program and policy.

The council also provides rehabilitation services to consumers, and provides them with a formal mechanism to influence the direction of rehabilitation programs in Oregon at the systemic and policy level.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY AND INITIATIVE

The State Rehabilitation Council is authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. This federal legislation identifies the council's required functions of the Council, which include:

- Work in partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRS) regarding essential planning and service delivery intended to result in meeting the employment potential of Oregonians with disabilities.
- Review and analyze program effectiveness, create and analyze consumer satisfaction materials, render concerns and recommendations to OVRS derived from performance standards and measurements of rehabilitation services.
- Advise the Governor and state agencies on the performance of vocational rehabilitation in Oregon regarding eligibility, program effectiveness and effect on individuals with disabilities. This includes preparation and distribution of this Annual Report.

- Coordinate the work of the State Rehabilitation Council with the activities of other disability-related councils in the state. This includes establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

- The full council meets four times per year. These sessions occur throughout the state and are structured in order to:
 - Listen to and hear from consumers and others;
 - Learn about programs, activities and needs specific to each region of the state;
 - Build/support collaborations with public and private partners involved in rehabilitation and employment in Oregon; and
 - Conduct the business of the council in a public setting.

During 2008, with appointments by the Governor, the council had 18 members representing people with disabilities, advocates, service providers, former VR consumers, employers, State Independent Living Council, Workforce Investment Board, Department of Education, Client Assistance Program, Parent and Training Information Center and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. On the 2008 council 61 percent of members were persons with disabilities, 17 percent former VR consumers and 22 percent minority group members. The council is committed to meeting the mandated membership requirements as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

NAME	TERM	REPRESENTATION / COMMUNITY
Burr, Jackie	12/04 – 11/08	Education / Statewide
Bob Craft	12/04 – 11/10	Workforce Investment Board / Advocate / Statewide
Cheryl Davis	08/05 – 09/08	Rehab Education / Advocate / Monmouth
Liz Fox	07/08 – 11/10	Community Rehab Program / Eugene
Guy Goode	12/04 – 11/10	Voc Rehab Counselor / Statewide (non-voting member)
Victoria Haight	03/08 – 11/10	Parent & Training Information Center / Statewide
Scott Hatley	06/07 – 11/09	Business / Advocate / Portland
Georgia Isaia	12/06 – 06/08	Advocate / Portland
Jesse Kappel	08/05 – 11/10	Advocate / Gladstone
Gary Lanctot	08/05 – 11/09	Business / Salem
Kedma Ough	09/06 – 11/08	Business / Portland
Cynthia Owens	05/04 – 11/09	Advocate / Family Member w/Disability / Portland
B.J. Rosenblad	09/08 – 11/11	Rehab Education / Advocate / Monmouth
Stephaine Taylor	NA	OVRS Administrator (non-voting member)
Patti Tom-Martin	07/06 – 11/10	Business / Advocate / Salem
Ted Wenk	07/06 – 11/09	Client Assistance Program / Statewide
Jim Wigington	12/06 – 11/10	Native American Rehab Program Section 121 / Advocate / Dallas
Ulee Yanok	03/07 – 09/08	Independent Living Council / Statewide
Jesus “Tony” Zarate	08/03 – 11/09	Advocate / Monmouth

Bold indicates primary representation

SRC COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Executive Committee

Chair: Jesse Kappel

Members: Liz Fox, Gary Lanctot, Kedma Ough, and Cynthia Owens

Responsibilities:

1. Conducts business of the council, including policy matters; acts on matters referred to it by the council.
2. Arranges meetings with OVRs, Governor's office, congressional delegates, legislators and others as needed.
3. Develops position papers and correspondence as needed.
4. Represents the council at SRC conferences, forums and events.
5. Works closely with the Membership Committee on recruitment and member development and training, keeps informed of other committee activities.
6. Makes decisions on behalf of the SRC and reports those decisions to the full Council. The Executive Committee is not authorized to set or change policy for the Council, but is responsible for referring proposed changes to the Council.
7. Performs other duties necessary to conduct business between regular quarterly meetings.

As a new member of the State Rehabilitation Council, I am excited to be such an integral piece in shaping policy and be able to advocate for Oregonians who experience significant disabilities. As director of a supported employment agency I have seen firsthand the benefits of employment and the powerful impact a job can have on self empowerment, independence and financial stability. SRC has the task of assisting VR in opening more and more doors within the business community and assuring that ALL Oregonians can be viable, tax-paying citizens with real, meaningful jobs. Though certainly a challenge, the outcomes will be phenomenal!

– Liz Fox

2008 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring visit

The Executive Committee met with the RSA Monitoring Team in February 2008 and participated in the RSA exit interview. Continue to monitor RSA inquiries to DHS and OVRs regarding how DHS accounts for spending of federal funds.

Needs Assessment

The Executive Committee worked with OVRs Administration and reviewed the Needs Assessment final report to prioritize the findings to use in drafting the State Plan.

Membership

The Executive Committee worked closely with the Membership Committee on recruitment and forwarded names to the council for a vote of recommendation to the Governor's office.

State Plan

Established a State Plan Workgroup and worked closely with OVRs in preparing the State Plan and held a facilitated work session at the May quarterly meeting to prioritize and finalize input to the State Plan.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)

The Executive Committee and full SRC continue our full support of the National Coalition of SRCs. In February 2008 the SRC voted to sign the NCSRC Resolution. The SRC has discussed many times the importance and value of endorsing the NCSRC. We applaud the NCSRC's efforts and success in developing a format that allows all SRCs to share best practices and form a strong national advocacy voice. We fully support and expect our staff's participation on the NCSRC

Steering Committee and will continue to support the growth and success of this organization.

SRC Online Training

The Executive Committee approved three SRC members and one staff member to attend the SRC Regional On Line Training Series in Sacramento, CA. Later the committee recommended to the full council that all members complete the online training before the November quarterly meeting. In the future, all new SRC members will be encouraged to complete the online training during their first 12 months of membership.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

SRC members collaborated with OVRs staff to produce a Consumer Satisfaction Survey, which was completed in March 2008. The results of the survey will be used by SRC in providing guidance and advice to OVRs, by SRC and OVRs in developing OVRs's 2009 State Plan for services and supports, and by OVRs in reviewing, refining and improving vocational rehabilitation processes and services.

Legislative visits

Individual members met with state legislators regarding disability issues. SRC information also was shared with the Oregon congressional delegation during the April CSAVR Capitol Hill visits.

Placement of OVRs within DHS:

The committee is still concerned about the placement of OVRs within the Department of Human Services and what appears to be the commingling of federal and state dollars and the lack of accountability by DHS of how money is spent.

Order of Selection

Due to serious budget shortfalls within Oregon and the Department of Human Services, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services will implement Order of Selection in January 2009.

As a member of SRC and a representative of an outside organization that is not directly connected to the state organization, it has been a unique experience to be part of this dynamic group. Our organization has worked with many state agencies and has developed strong working relationships and partnerships with the state, sharing clients, plans, concepts and considerations. This has provided me with the opportunity to view operational procedures, organizational structuring and deliverable results from both my organization and the state agencies. It also has provided me with a voice to share my input with those who are directly related to the state organizations and allowed my perspective to be considered. I have found this to be highly rewarding in that my opinions and thoughts can be pooled with others and the end results are then relayed to other organizations that develop policies and procedures for state agencies. Collectively, the SRC committees can gather thoughts, opinions and concerns, discuss these items, and then relay their collective conclusions to other individuals and groups and aid in the process of making objective decisions.

Personally, I see the role of SRC as a vital step in building relationships with other agencies, aiding in the decision-making process by the inclusion of other agencies to share their input, and being a great source of information. By working as a group with members from various professional backgrounds, perspectives and considerations can be formed that are just not internally determined but are developed from a holistic approach. This builds trust and relationships and partnerships which eventually leads to better services for those who seek the services of all involved agencies.

- Jim Wigington

While the SRC does not agree with the agency's decision to implement Order of Selection, we will support the decision they have been forced to make. The Council is concerned that Order of Selection will have an adverse effect on the number of people with disabilities being able to obtain and maintain employment.

The State Rehabilitation Council submitted the following concerns and recommendations to OVRs regarding Order of Selection:

Concerns:

- We believe the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is being forced into Order of Selection in part due to the lack of sound fiscal management of OVRs funds by DHS, which is evident in the missing 5 million budget money. This is a clear example of how OVRs does not meet federal requirements of the VR Administrator having control over their own budget as required in 34CFR361.13(c)1(iv).
- Three years ago the SRC requested OVRs to establish an OOS Taskforce to create a "strategic method or plan" to avoid going into Order of Selection in the future. This did not take place until October 2008. It was our desire to partner with OVRs and are disappointed that strategic long range planning with the SRC did not take place.
- Limited resources may be diverted from "client services" to "managing the process" such as, staffing issues may cause OVRs to temporarily move staff to another office where per-diem cost may occur.
- Going into Order of Selection may mean time and funds will be spent on assessments or eligibility determination and not on obtaining employment.

- OVRS staff morale may deteriorate as they will not be able to write plans, but be expected to become more “job developers” and monitoring plans. There will need to be some significant training provided to staff to promote this new role.

Recommendations:

- We would like VR counselors during this time to continue to work with transition students, One Stops and businesses to help them understand the value and resources that individuals with disabilities can provide in the work place, understand the Americans with Disability Act and how to better prepare those transitioning students to meet the needs of the business community.
- Regarding the use of Supported Employment Part B funding, it is the desire of the SRC to seek clarification with OVRS, and RSA to make changes in state regulations on how services relating to these funds can be spent on employment for consumers.
- It is the desire of the SRC to work with OVRS in developing a Strategic Plan to bring OVRS out of Order of Selection as quickly as possible. We will continue to work with OVRS in oversight of OOS to insure consumers understand the order and that the order is fair to people with disabilities applying for services with OVRS.

The Council is committed to work with OVRS to minimize the amount of time spent in Order of Selection and will continue to work with the agency to refine the process to be as consumer friendly as possible.

Other duties of SRC: updating the SRC bylaws, monitoring the OVRS budget, responding to requests for information, writing letters of support for northwest TACE centers and collaborating with OVRS on a 2009 calendar to present to legislators for the 2009 legislative session.

As a representative of Oregon Parent Training & Information Center and a parent of a teenager with Autism Spectrum Disorder, having the opportunity to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council has provided me with a better understanding of the workings of OVRS, how policy decisions are made and the overall quality of our voc-rehab program. As a new member of the council I still have a lot to learn, but I have a much better appreciation of the complexities involved in providing services for people with a range of disabilities and look forward to working with the other community representatives and the OVRS staff toward continued improvement in finding fulfilling opportunities for people with disabilities.

– Victoria Haight

Membership Committee

Chair: Tony Zarate

Members: Scott Hatley and Patti Tom-Martin

Responsibilities:

1. Recruitment of new members, including assessment of population sectors' representation and skills needed to fill gaps;
2. Council member development and training;
3. Mentoring new council members.

2008 Membership Committee Report

The Membership Committee is committed to ensuring that the SRC meets the federally mandated membership requirements. The Governor appointed three new members to SRC in 2008. The majority of council members are persons with disabilities. The Workforce Investment Board currently is the only vacant mandated SRC position. The committee will continue to focus on recruiting the most qualified candidates to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council.

Public Advocacy Committee

Chair: Cynthia Owens

Members: Jackie Burr, Bob Craft, Victoria Haight, Jim Wigington and Ulee Yanok

2008 Public Advocacy Committee Report

The Public Advocacy Committee is in the process of re-defining its role and responsibilities. During most of 2008 the committee worked to support and participate in the activities of the Quality Assurance Committee.

Quality Assurance Committee

Chair: Gary Lanctot

Members: Liz Fox, Guy Goode, B.J. Rosenblad and Ted Wenk

Responsibilities:

1. SRC field visits to OVRS offices;
2. Consumer Satisfaction Survey;
3. Public input at the SRC meetings;
4. Client Assistance Program (CAP) reviews;
5. OVRS State Plan development and compliance reviews, including the resource plan;
6. Working with OVRS regarding policy and implementation of Order of Selection;
7. SRC responsibilities for the 107 review process;
8. OVRS staff surveys;
9. OVRS internal policies review and comment.

2008 Quality Assurance Committee Report

The Quality Assurance Committee worked closely with the SRC Executive Committee and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff on Order of Selection, Needs Assessment, State Plan and the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

As mandated policy partners with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the committee also worked with the agency on rule and policy changes pertaining to: client vendor rules, client travel expense rules, application rules policy and process, contested case notice rules, rules defining the terms rehabilitation training and vocational rehabilitation training, public records fee, Pell Grant rules, qualified personnel rules, vehicle modification rules, and the procedures and forms for client grievances.

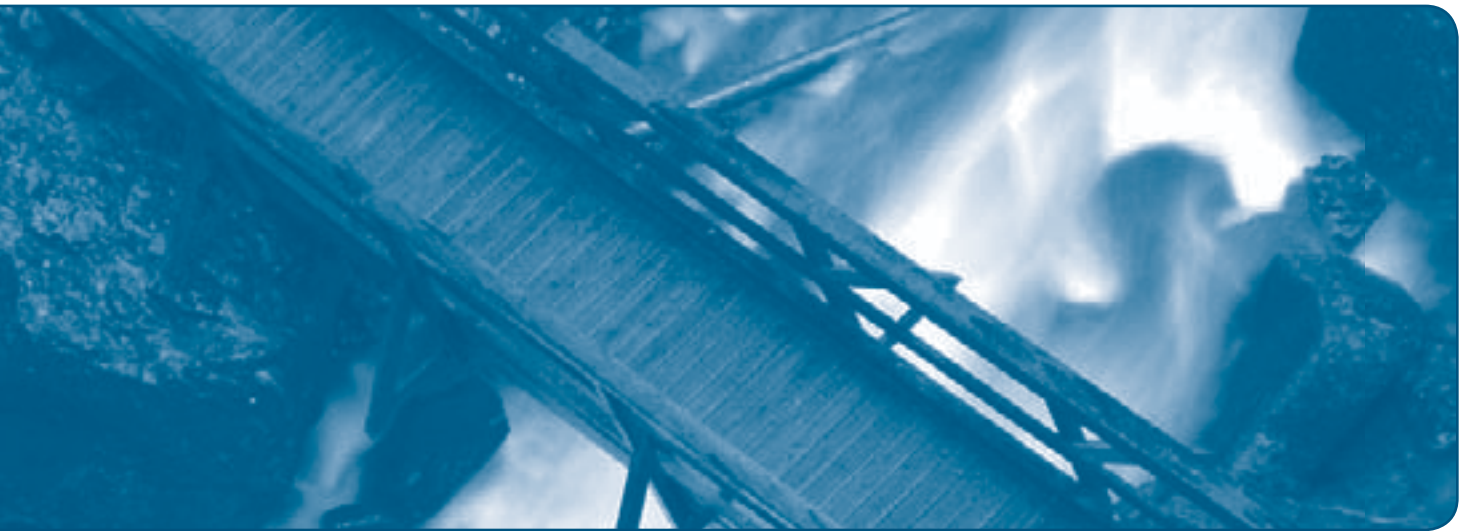
SRC ACTIVITIES

2008 State Rehabilitation Council Impact

- SRC partnered with OVRS in the development of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment which was completed in December 2007. In 2008, SRC reviewed the final report with OVRS and prioritized the findings to use in drafting the State Plan. (Needs Assessment Executive Summary on page 61.
- SRC continues to monitor the OVRS budget and asked the agency to form a Order of Selection (OOS) Task Force that would study ways to avoid going into OOS.
- SRC responded to the Notice of Proposed Priority concerning the conversion of the Regional Continuing Education Programs into Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers.
- SRC Executive Committee participated in the RSA Monitoring Review.
- SRC signed off on the NCSRC Resolution, fully supporting the coalition and the opportunity it provides for a strong national advocacy voice and sharing of best practices.
- SRC was represented at the 2008 CSAVR Spring Conference in Bethesda, MD. Oregon continues to participate on the National Coalition of SRCs Steering Committee. Assisted in the development of the SRC meeting agenda and visited Oregon congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.
- SRC completed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey which began in 2007. (Survey and Report on 17.
- SRC presented a council overview at OVRS new counselor trainings.
- SRC participates in bi-monthly conference calls of the National Coalition of SRCs and the NCSRC bi-monthly Steering Committee conference calls.
- SRC Quality Assurance Committee worked with OVRS on the adoption of rules and policies regarding client travel expenses, closure as other than rehabilitated, client vendors, qualified personnel, written hearing

I have greatly enjoyed being a part of the State Rehabilitation Council. As an educator, it has provided me the opportunity to have an inside view of current issues in the VR system to take back to our students. In addition, it provides us the opportunity to network and to be sure that our academic programs are meeting the current and on-going needs of VR. It is a pleasure to work with the professionals, advocates, consumers and family members who make up SRC. I find that I learn something new about the system and about employment issues for individuals with disabilities at every meeting. It is an honor to be a part of the process and to play some small role in the impact that VR has on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

– Cheryl Davis



I am honored to be a new member of the State Rehabilitation Council. It is a pleasure for me to see, from the inside, the commitment that OVRS has to providing quality services to clients. What a wonderful opportunity it is for me to network with other professionals in the field. As an educator, I believe being a member of this council will teach me a lot and allow me the opportunity to bring back valuable information to students. I look forward to being a working member of this council.

– BJ Rosenblad

notices, analysis of application process, certification of rehabilitation providers and order of selection.

- SRC partnered with OVRS and participated in the development of the State Plan.
- SRC continued membership recruitment efforts. The Governor appointed three new members in 2008.
- SRC held quarterly meetings around the state in February, May, August and November.
- SRC members and staff attended the RSA Online Training in Sacramento, California, in June.
- SRC members attended the OVRS In-Service Conference August 12 – 13 in Salem.
- SRC wrote letters of support for the northwest TACE Centers.
- SRC updated its bylaws.
- SRC was represented at the 2008 CSAVR Fall Conference in San Diego, California. Participated on the NCSRC conference planning committee.
- SRC continues to partner with the State Independent Living Council, Client Assistance Program, Oregon Council of Developmental Disabilities and other advocacy groups.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL RESOURCE PLAN

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has continued its commitment of resources to support the effective functioning of the State Rehabilitation Council. Resources include:

1. Adequate funding to support full member participation and consumer involvement across the state.
2. Dedicated staff support for full council and committee activities. Costs include salaries and benefits for council coordinator and clerical support. (These costs, totaling \$95,427, are reflected in another portion of the VR budget.)
3. Annual budget for 2008 is \$41,723.

Resource Plan	
Category	2008-2009 Budget
Expenditures	\$26,211
Quarterly meetings <i>Includes meals, meeting accommodations, facilitators, member travel, member per diem, attendant care, reasonable accommodations</i>	
Member training & involvement <i>Includes teleconference calls, committee meeting costs, travel, regional and national meetings</i>	\$7,489
Major council activities <i>Includes annual report, member recruitment, client and employee surveys</i>	\$3,744
Supplies and services <i>Includes materials and supplies, staff travel, postage and printing</i>	\$4,279

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR SRC MEMBER

Cynthia Owens, a member of the Oregon SRC Executive Committee, was invited to participate on a panel at the National Forum on Disability Issues, July 26, 2008, in Columbus, Ohio. The forum was a historic, nonpartisan forum on

national disability policy featuring the 2008 presidential candidates and/or representative from their campaigns. The forum was organized by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the Ohio Disability Vote Coalition (ODVC) and sponsored by more than 80 national, state and local disability-related organizations and media organizations.

The forum program contained biographies of each panelist. Cynthia's bio reads:

"Cynthia Owens works for Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, as the Family Issues, Medicaid, Transition and Employment Specialist. She was the coordinator of The Waitlist Campaign for the Staley Lawsuit, creating

the first home and community based waiver in Oregon for individuals over 18. Owens has been involved with advocating for services for developmentally disabled since 1986 when Family Support started in Oregon. She is the past chair of the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Self-Determination Resources, Inc, Brokerage.

The mother of four children, Owens has a 28 year old son, Andy with acquired cerebral palsy. Andy received the Justin Dart Award from Governor Kulongoski for his work in the

community at Powell's Bookstore. Andy is proof that even someone with a significant disability can work if they are given the chance and have the right supports. For over seven years he has used assistive technology to perform the same job as others while earning \$10.89 an hour."

Cynthia is passionate and works tirelessly to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. She currently is working with Senator Gordon Smith, who has agreed to support a bill previously titled "SSI Financial Security Accounts for Individuals with Disabilities." A new name will be assigned to this bill. At her request, Senator Smith also has agreed to sponsor a bill "SSI Retirement Account" that will allow people on or eligible for SSI who are working to put money into their own retirement account and not lose their eligibility for SSI, SSDI or Medicaid. This would allow them to draw down on their own retirement savings when they are at retirement age. Cynthia believes that the legal ability to save for retirement is an incentive to go to work and acquire savings, which would also take some pressure off of Social Security.

Cynthia also was a member of the DD Employment Committee that influenced Oregon to take a formal stand on employment for all people with disabilities across all areas of service."

The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council congratulates Cynthia for her success in advocating for persons with disabilities and extends our thanks and appreciation for her tremendous contributions to the Council.



Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

SUCCESS STORIES

Luis is a bi-lingual graduate of Canby High School. He was 19 when he came to Vocational Rehabilitation at the suggestion of his physician. He was diagnosed with end stage renal failure in March 2007. He is now on SSDI and on a wait list for a kidney transplant. Other challenges include hypertension and a doctors' order of no physical work due to impaired endurance. Luis wasn't sure he could work due to his dialysis schedule, which is three times a week



for four to five hours each visit. However, he wanted to try. We met with Jorge Martinez and Jaime Sanchez of Easter Seals to see what could be developed for Luis. After only a short time he became employed by Transportation and Development in Oregon City as a cashier/ticket collector on the Canby Ferry. He is working 32 hours per week at \$11 an hour. The schedule is flexible around his treatments. Luis is currently studying to be a river boat driver and hopes to take over when his supervisor retires. He also wishes for a kidney transplant match soon. Sometimes a consumer can take your breath away. Luis is definitely one of them.

Submitted by Teresa Findley and Jessica Atalla (Clackamas)

When I lost my job in 2001 it took almost the entire year looking for a new job before, I finally realized that I needed help. Not only could I not find a job, but I had a lot of health issues. I enrolled with VR and my counselor helped me with many issues I had both physically and emotionally.

Vocational Rehab helped me get a volunteer job at a non-profit. After a few more months there, I was hired, and worked there for three years. When this job ended you'd think that I would have had an easier time finding a new job but it wasn't easier. My counselor and I started working together again and decided to look into state positions because that's where my interest lay. Again my lack of self confidence got in my way during the interviews; we tried to off set that by getting a volunteer job with the state and soon I was offered an interview.

Since I had been working with these people the interview was more like talking to friends rather than strangers. I was offered the job. I think because I was working as a volunteer, my confidence was strengthened, so I was more comfortable during the interviews and they were able to view me differently.

I have been working for the state of Oregon DHS Child Welfare office for over two years now and feel that I am doing something very worthwhile. I am very lucky to have been assigned to my Voc Rehab counselor because she had the empathy I needed. She listened when I talked. She didn't give up on me, she made a huge difference in my life when I really needed it. I felt like I wasn't just an assignment, she treated me as an individual. I believe that Voc Rehab works when it has counselors of the quality of people like my counselor.

Marguerita C. Henry, submitted by staff from Central Portland

Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

SUCCESS STORIES

I moved to Portland from Pennsylvania in 2006. I am hearing impaired and had experience with Vocational Rehab in Pennsylvania. I first came to VR in Oregon when I moved here and was searching for a job. I had exhausted almost all of my leads and I was getting frustrated. As I began working with a VR counselor, Susan Howard, I was concerned with my hearing aids and she sent me to have them checked and adjusted. We discussed how to handle my hearing loss in interviews and on the job. Soon, a job for which I had applied was offered to me. I was able to interview well now that my hearing aids were working at capacity. I was working in a call center and it was seasonal, but it was a job. She followed me through several months of employment to see if I needed further accommodation and then closed my file as it appeared I was able to do this work. When I was furloughed from that position, I began the search for a full time position. I was fortunate enough to find one, though it is in another call center. This is a very good job – much better than the one I had before. I am extremely fortunate to have been hired and I am very happy here. Coming up on one year of my employment, there was a change in my hearing. I began to struggle with calls. I was having difficulty understanding what it was customers were saying. I was afraid that this would affect my performance and that my job would be in jeopardy. My health insurance paid for an audiogram and my hearing had changed. I needed new hearing aids which were not covered by insurance. An e-mail to Susan put the wheels in motion. In a few short weeks, we had met, worked up a plan and I had new hearing aids! While I am still in the trial phase, they appear to be a huge improvement over my old ones and work has become easier for me. I no longer worry that my performance will be affected nor that I may lose my job. VR has been a blessing to me and for that I am very thankful!



Janine M. Slotterback, *submitted by staff from Central Portland*

Brad has survived on Social Security disability benefits for several years and was thrilled to land a part-time job as caretaker for a large apartment complex. As part of his pay his landlord gave him free rent worth \$800 a month. But when Social Security found out about the free rent, they sent him a letter saying his combined earnings would cause him to lose his benefits. Brad feared that he couldn't possibly survive on his small wages alone. His mental and physical stability were based on his balance of work, financial security and a quiet, comfortable home. This threat to his stability triggered a relapse of his disability. Brad heard about WIN and came to LILA for work incentives counseling. After several sessions and lots of paperwork the WIN staff were able to help Brad document something called an 'employer subsidy,' meaning that his employer was paying Brad standard wages for less-than-standard productivity. As a result, Social Security agreed to continue Brad's benefits, he was able to keep his job and remain in his home, and his mental and physical stability remain intact.

Submitted by Carol Simila, Work Incentives Coordinator (Salem)

At age 3, I cross paths with a sexual predator. Since he is much bigger than I was I could not defend myself. My response to this “experience” was to become aggressive. To curb this aggression, my parents sent me to many doctors, and they ALL told my folks to put me in an institution. I end up serving time at Fairview for six years, I was released from Fairview at age 13. In grade school and high school, I had very few friends. I did find work in the forest and in a machine shop. As I got older it got harder to get jobs when a job ended. That’s where Voc Rehab came into play. I worked with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Susan Howard, and she helped me to understand that my upbringing, mostly in Fairview affected the way I talked and the way I got along with other people. She helped me to find an employer that would accept my differences and give me a chance to show how good I can work.

Susan Howard helped me into an outstanding job with a company that really appreciates my hard work. They are really great people to work for...and I enjoy my work. Anne, my supervisor, places supreme value on teamwork and likes us to be part of the family. I plan on staying there for a long time!! As a result, I have a outstanding credit score...riding a very mean Harley and running 10 mile a day during my free time, at the age of 60!!

Bob VanDuesen, *submitted by Susan Howard, (Portland)*

Sue has struggled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for 20 years, never able to hold a job for long because of problems with authority figures. Among her past work experience is a two-year stint in a café, a positive experience that had stuck with her. Her mental illness had immobilized her for years when the opportunity to buy an espresso cart at a discount came up. Something clicked for her. In a leap of faith she bought the cart and started to dream of owning and running her own espresso cart. But how could she possibly pull this off?

Sue’s Voc Rehab counselor provided classes for entrepreneurs and the dream began to take shape. But she needed money, capital for buying equipment and supplies. Barely able to survive on her Social Security disability benefits, she was stumped over how to proceed.

Then her Voc Rehab counselor heard about LILA’s WIN Project, the Work Incentive Network, and its offer of free counseling on how to use Social Security work incentives to launch a new career or a business. Through her sessions with Emma Levert and Carol Simila, Sue came to understand that her dream was not too far-fetched, that work incentives like PASS, a Plan to Achieve Self-Support, would allow her to accumulate the capital she needed to launch her business without losing her disability benefits while her earnings are low.

Sue’s plans took off from there. Because of the promise of additional funding, Voc Rehab finalized Sue’s work plan for the business and offered to pay some start-up expenses while her PASS application is in progress. Sue’s confidence blossomed as she developed a concrete plan for her own success, and reached full bloom as she negotiated an agreement with a golf course to locate her espresso cart. Sue is on her way to independence, thanks to WIN and LILA!

Sue, *submitted by Carol Simila, Work Incentives Coordinator (Salem)*

Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

SUCCESS STORIES

Robert came to Vocational Rehabilitation seeking an evaluation and recommendations about how to improve his writing and reading comprehension skills. Robert was a gifted athlete and a sports hero in high school but his inability to read was ignored. Even though he had his high school diploma Robert was acutely aware that his academic skills were lacking. Robert worked successfully for many years as a CNA but then injured his knee and was unable to continue with that line of work. His reading and writing skills now prevented him from finding work, but he still had the desire to further his education and get a good job helping people.



Robert volunteered much of his time, helping many others through community programs and church activities. He kept trying to improve his reading skills on his own, but couldn't seem to do so. And he couldn't seem to get a good job. Robert received SSDI but he simply did not make enough on SSDI to support himself and his family. Robert was frustrated when he came to VR.

With VR's assistance, Robert was able to attend special training to improve his reading skills. He learned how to use the computer and Dragon Dictate to make reports and for other written communications. Then with the help of a job developer, Robert obtained a job as a YMCA After School Boy's Group Leader.

This is a wonderful job for Robert as he is making a real difference in the lives of at-risk young boys. Robert's co-workers look up to him and value his contributions on how to successfully work with this vulnerable population. He is a successful role model and mentor for young at-risk boys, which has been a lifetime employment goal for Robert.

Submitted by Teddy Forester (Portland)

When I met Ronnie Shainin, my confidence level was at an all-time low. I had tried many avenues to get back to work. I was studying the Foundations of Herbalism course with Christopher Hobbs and was interested in working in the herbal field. I was also interested in writing a PASS Plan. Ronnie did extensive research and sent me information on writing business plans and doing feasibility studies for the PASS Plan. She also introduced me to Janet Stevely, the owner of Workable Solutions. Janet is an expert in writing PASS Plans.

Ronnie also did some herbal research and sent me information on Pacific Botanicals, a wholesale organic herb company near Grants Pass. I started working with Janet Stevely on a PASS Plan, Ronnie continued to call and check on my progress. She met with Janet and me several times.

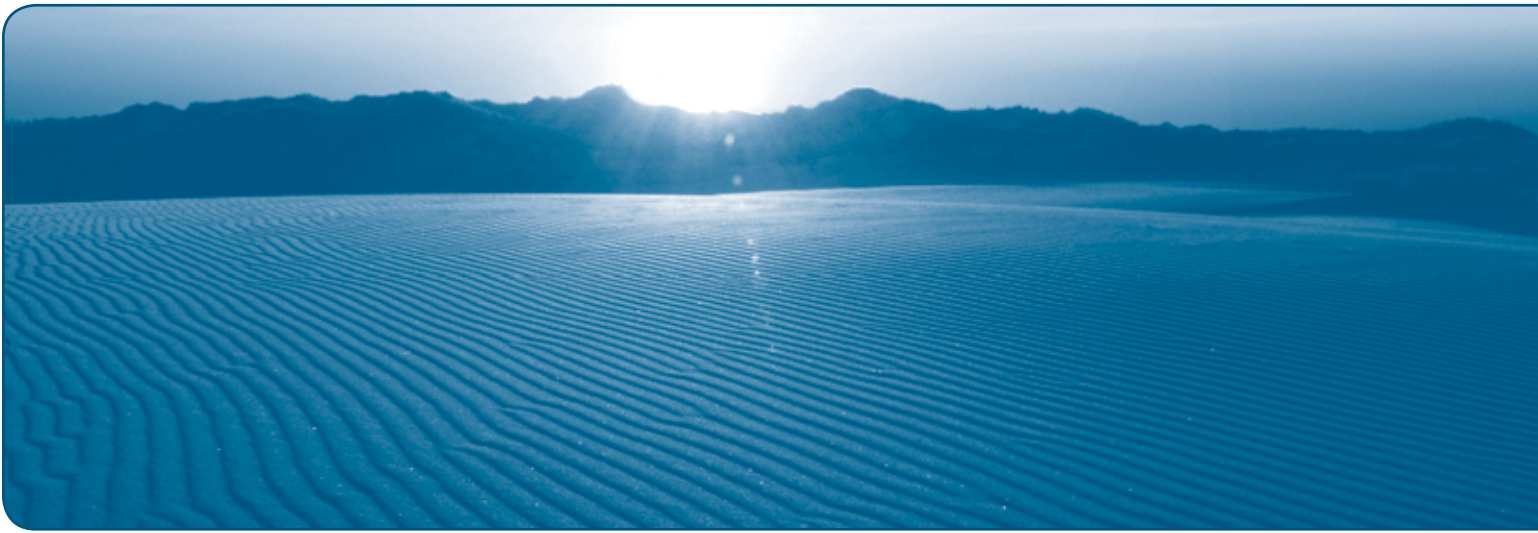
I am now working at Pacific Botanicals as a customer service representative. Recently I had had a particularly hard day at work. I came home pretty discouraged when I opened the mailbox there was a package from Ronnie. It was a wonderful herb book and a work planner book. It really made my day.

I am very grateful to Ronnie for her encouragement and genuine caring. Ronnie has amazing networking skills and is so willing to share every resource available to her. Her ability to combine professionalism and heartfelt caring has a seamless quality.

I felt that Ronnie genuinely wanted me to succeed and did everything in her power to help me succeed.

With Much Gratitude,

Mahli Caron, *submitted by Wayne Moak (Medford)*



A year and a half ago, I was injured on the job. I was off work for three months and was permitted to go back to try light duty. My second week into light duty, I was let go from my job. I tried to file for unemployment, but was denied because I was unable to work all of the hours and days normal for the type of work I was seeking, and I was unable to perform the work.

I had no idea what to do. I mean, who wants to hire someone currently under a doctor's restriction for an injury?

I went to Chemeketa Polk Career Center, and was blessed with the best worker ever, Michelle Pelzer. She was as stumped about my situation as I was, well, for about 30 seconds. Michelle connected me with Voc Rehab. I met with my worker and we discussed my options.

At this point I had been through physical therapy and I was getting very few results. My doctor determined that I would not be able to do that line of work anymore.

I had office skills that were 10 years old, besides some bookkeeping that I had done in the recent years. So our plan was to refresh and update those skills.

I attended a customized training program at DePaul Training, and learned Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint, as well as other basic office technology and skills.

After completing a three-month program at DePaul, I was out in the world to find a new job. I was not alone, however; my Voc Rehab counselor Eric Bowling was there every step of the way, to encourage me, give me helpful ideas, and to check in with and discuss my interviews and go over questions. He also signed me up for the HIRE program. The HIRE program led to even more interviews, and three months after leaving DePaul and starting my search, I was hired on with the state for an OS2 position. I am nearing my first month of employment and I am so happy to have my new job. The stability it brings to me and my kids is most important of all, but even with my continued medical condition, I have found a job I CAN do.

All the agency staff I have worked with has been wonderful, knowledgeable, and extremely helpful and supportive. I couldn't have made it this far without any of them.

Jennifer Thornsted, *submitted by Eric Bowling (Salem)*



CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVR) is responsible for the administration and operation of Oregon's general vocational rehabilitation program; and is a component of DHS and a mandated partner in Oregon's workforce one-stop system (known as WorkSource Oregon). State vocational rehabilitation programs, including OVR, are federal/state partnerships authorized by Congress through federal legislation, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a citizen council that works in partnership with OVR. The SRC provides guidance at the systemic and policy level to assure that OVR assists Oregonians with disabilities achieve meaningful employment and independence. State vocational rehabilitation councils, including SRC, are authorized by the Rehabilitation Act. SRC members are appointed by the governor.

The mission of OVR is to assist Oregonians with disabilities achieve and maintain employment and independence. In 2006, OVR served 18,004 individuals with disabilities utilizing 124 trained vocational rehabilitation counselors from 33 field offices and 23 single-employee out-stations in one-stop workforce centers, schools and other human services locations located throughout the state.



The provision of high-quality, culturally appropriate services that result in successful employment outcomes is the shared expectation of OVRS, the SRC and the people served by Oregon's state rehabilitation system. OVRS is responsible for providing services to eligible Oregonians with disabilities consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice so that such individuals may prepare for, engage in, and retain gainful employment.

A number of federal laws have direct bearing on OVRS and SRC. In amending the Rehabilitation Act in 1998, Congress incorporated it in its entirety into the Workforce Investment Act as Title IV. The purpose of Title IV is to assist states in operating statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, effective, efficient, and accountable programs of vocational rehabilitation. A number of other federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, also apply to state vocational rehabilitation systems.

Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act, as Oregon's designated state rehabilitation council, the SRC's responsibilities include:

To the extent feasible, conduct[ing] a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with —

(A) the functions performed by [OVRs];

(B) vocational rehabilitation services provided by [OVRs] and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this chapter; and

(C) Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving [vocational rehabilitation] services. . . including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes[.]

(29 USC 725)

The results of the customer satisfaction survey will be used by the SRC in providing guidance and advice to OVRs, by the SRC and OVRs in developing OVRs'

2009 State Plan for services and supports, and by OVRs in reviewing, refining and improving vocational rehabilitation processes and services.

Executive summary

SRC and OVRs collaborated and produced a Satisfaction with VR Services survey with five

major categories; Communication and Timeliness of Services; Services Leading to Eligibility Determination; Services Leading to an Employment Plan; Services Provided in Plan; and Overall Satisfaction with VR Services.

The survey was randomly administered to 284 vocational rehabilitation clients in the State of Oregon. Participating clients were chosen to represent six major case status categories; individual determined ineligible for services; cases not yet in plan; cases in plan; cases closed without employment; cases closed with employment; and cases closed prior to plan. Final participation rates were overall representative of the state as a whole.

Approximately 70% of clients indicated an overall high level of satisfaction with VR services provided in the State of Oregon. Clients currently in plan and clients closed with employment consistently reported the greatest satisfaction. Clients not yet in plan reported the lowest level of satisfaction.

Group differences based on case status were found on 14 of the 40 items comprising the survey. Differences by minority status, developmental disability, severe and persistent mental illness, and branch location were found on four of the items.

Analysis of the results concluded that all of the items on the survey were relevant and useful. Therefore, the survey presented in this report will be used for future assessments of the client satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services in Oregon.

Satisfaction with VR Services

Long Form

ID:

A

COMMUNICATION & TIMELINESS OF SERVICES

To begin, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about VR service you received. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The information provided to me was easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. VR services were clearly explained to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I had no difficulty communicating with my VR counselor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My VR counselor was available for appointments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My personal information was discussed with me in private.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My VR counselor was knowledgeable about my disability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I was encouraged to ask questions during the VR process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I always felt welcome at the VR office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My VR counselor was sensitive to my cultural background (e.g. race, religion, language, sexual orientation).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I was treated with respect and courtesy while at VR.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. My appointments started on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My phone calls were returned timely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I was able to meet with my VR counselor as needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. How much time was it from the first time you contacted VR to when you had an individual appointment with a VR counselor?				
<input type="radio"/> 1 week;	<input type="radio"/> 2 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> 4 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> More than a month

15. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the method of communication and timeliness of services from VR?

B SERVICES LEADING TO ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Next, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about VR services leading to your eligibility determination. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
16. If I was tested/evaluated, the reason for the test was clearly described to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. The results of the tests were described so I could understand them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. My VR counselor clearly described why I was or why I was not eligible for VR services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. My VR counselor clearly explained what services were available to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I understand why I was eligible for certain services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the services leading to your eligibility determination with VR?

C

SERVICES LEADING TO AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Again, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about services leading to an employment plan. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
22. My VR counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my future work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I actively participated in the development of my plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. My VR counselor helped me to choose an appropriate job goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. My interests, strengths, abilities, and needs were considered in developing my plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. My plan reflects services which meets my specific needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Overall, I am satisfied how my employment plan was developed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the services leading to your employment plan with VR?

D SERVICES PROVIDED IN PLAN

Again, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about services provided in plan. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
29. When needed, I was referred to programs that could help me research my employment goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. My VR counselor clearly described what services were available to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. My plan helped me get skills needed to obtain employment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Overall, I was satisfied with the services provided by VR included in my employment plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the services received in your employment plan?

E OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH VR SERVICES

Now, please tell us to the extent you agree or disagree with the level of your satisfaction with VR services. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
34. Overall, my VR services were provided in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
35. I received all the services I was told I would receive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. I was told about any delays in my service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. If there were delays in my services, I was told why.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Overall, the VR services I received met my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. If a friend of mine were in a similar situation to me, I would tell them to go to VR.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. Is there any further information that you would like to provide about your satisfaction with VR services?

F DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This is the last section. Please answer the following questions about yourself.

41. What is your current employment situation?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-Employed
- Not employed, but looking for employment
- Not employed and not looking for employment
- In school
- Full time home maker
- Retired
- Other: Please specify:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
42. I am satisfied with my current employment choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. Are there additional services you feel VR could have provided which would have been useful to help you get a job?

Satisfaction with VR Services

Short Form

A

COMMUNICATION & TIMELINESS OF SERVICES

To begin, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about VR service you received. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The information provided to me was easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. VR services were clearly explained to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I had no difficulty communicating with my VR counselor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My VR counselor was available for appointments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My personal information was discussed with me in private.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My VR counselor was knowledgeable about my disability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I was encouraged to ask questions during the VR process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I always felt welcome at the VR office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My VR counselor was sensitive to my cultural background (e.g. race, religion, language, sexual orientation).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I was treated with respect and courtesy while at VR.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. My appointments started on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My phone calls were returned timely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I was able to meet with my VR counselor as needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. How much time was it from the first time you contacted VR to when you had an individual appointment with a VR counselor?				
<input type="radio"/> 1 week;	<input type="radio"/> 2 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> 4 weeks;	<input type="radio"/> More than a month

15. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the method of communication and timeliness of services from VR?

B SERVICES LEADING TO ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Next, please answer to the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about VR services leading to your eligibility determination. *Fill in the appropriate circle.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
16. If I was tested/evaluated, the reason for the test was clearly described to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. The results of the tests were described so I could understand them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. My VR counselor clearly described why I was or why I was not eligible for VR services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. My VR counselor clearly explained what services were available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Overall, I agreed with the decision leading to my ineligibility determination with VR.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Is there any further information you would like to provide about the services leading to your eligibility determination with VR?

C

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH VR SERVICES

Now, please tell us to the extent you agree or disagree by the level of satisfaction with VR services. Fill in the appropriate circle.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
22. Overall, my VR services were provided in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I received all the services I was told I would receive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I was told about any delays in my service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. If there were delays in my services, I was told why.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Overall, the VR services I received met my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. If a friend of mine were in a similar situation to me, I would tell them to go to VR.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Is there any further information that you would like to provide about your satisfaction with VR services?

D DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This is the last section. Please answer the following questions about yourself.

29. What is your current employment situation?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-Employed
- Not employed, but looking for employment
- Not employed and not looking for employment
- In school
- Full time home maker
- Retired
- Other: Please specify:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Does Not Apply
30. I am satisfied with my current employment choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. Are there additional services you feel VR could have provided which would have been useful to help you get a job?

2008 OVRS OVERVIEW

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



2008 OVRS OVERVIEW

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Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

OVERVIEW

2008 was a busy and productive year for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs). OVRs's partnership and collaboration with community and state agency partners, business, education and others resulted in significant accomplishments. OVRs served more than 16,447 Oregonians during Federal Fiscal Year 2008 (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008). Of these, 4,489 were placed into individualized plans for employment (IPEs) and 2,604 into permanent positions.

OVRs and the State Rehabilitation Council revised and updated the agency's state plan for services after completing a new triennial comprehensive assessment of the need for vocational rehabilitation services in Oregon, and completing a new satisfaction survey of OVRs consumers. The 2009 State Plan contains strategic goals, objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes.

The Work Incentives Network (WIN) – which is a joint effort of OVRs' Competitive Employment Project (CEP), the State Independent Living Council, local Centers for Independent Living and the Disability Rights Oregon – completed its first year of operations. As a result, more than 1,300 people with disabilities throughout Oregon were assisted in planning and using their public benefits and work incentives to obtain employment.

The Addictions and Mental Health Division, CEP and OVRs continued to underwrite and work with the recently established Center for Excellence. The Center provides training and technical assistance to community mental health programs in developing and providing evidence-based supported employment to persons with serious mental illnesses. The Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS), OVRs and CEP continued to advance competitive employment of persons with developmental disabilities. OVRs and CEP provided ODDS with input on its development of an "employment first" policy and continued to participate with ODDS on the multi-state Supportive Employment Leadership Network.



More recently, OVRS was awarded a new Medicaid Infrastructure Grant with which to continue CEP and its various initiatives through 2010.

In partnership with 114 participating high schools, the Department of Education and the University of Oregon (UO), OVRS continued its successful Youth Transition Program. In addition, OVRS, five high schools in Lane County and U of O's began implementation of Project Access, one of seven model demonstration projects to improve the post-secondary and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration.

OVRS' Enhancing Employment Outcomes (EEO) Project, previously a pilot, was rolled out statewide. Through 40-plus training events held throughout Oregon, OVRS counseling staff and allied disability professionals were assisted in developing new skill sets and strategies for placing individuals with significant barriers in employment, and addressing motivational issues that some consumers confront in overcoming their disability-related barriers.

OVRS continued to support and collaborate with the Oregon Business Leadership Network, a business-to-business effort to educate and support Oregon businesses and employers in hiring and retaining Oregonians with disabilities. In 2008, OBLN strengthened its recently established chapter in Salem, laid the foundation for becoming a self-sustaining venture through strategic and business planning, and hosted the U.S. Business Leadership Network's 2008 annual national conference.

OVRS continued its efforts with the State Independent Living Council and Oregon's Centers for Independent Living to increase and strengthen the capacity in both systems to assist individuals with disabilities to become independent and self sufficient.

The details of OVRS' progress on these and other initiatives and activities are described in the following pages of this report.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Based on preliminary data and as indicated in the chart below, OVRS appears to have met six of the seven indicators and both standards. It failed indicator 1.1 which requires that OVRS exceed the number of closed cases with an employment outcome from the prior federal fiscal year by at least one. OVRS had 113 fewer closures with employment in FFY 2007 than in FFY 2006.



FFY 2007 Standards and Indicators Summary Report

Indicator 1.1 Change in employment outcomes (>0)	-113
Indicator 1.2 Percent of employment outcomes (>=55.8 percent)	65.1 percent
Indicator 1.3 Competitive employment (>=72.6 percent)	98.47 percent
Indicator 1.4 Significant disability (>=62.4 percent)	82.81 percent
Indicator 1.5 Earnings ratio (>=.52)	0.567
Indicator 1.6 Self support (>=53.0)	74.89
Indicator 2.1 Minority services ratio (>= .80)	0.874
Number of indicators in Standard 1 that were passed	5 of 6
Number of primary indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 that were passed	3 of 3

LOCATIONS AND STAFFING

OVRs services were provided at 56 locations throughout Oregon. These included 34 field offices, multiple single-employee outstations in one-stop career centers, educational centers, and other human services agencies.

LOCATION	BRANCH OFFICE	OUT STATION	SATELLITE OFFICE	HSA's	OS 1, 2	VRCs	MANAGERS
Albany	XX			4		5	1
Astoria			XX	1		1	
Baker City	XX			1		2	1
Bend	XX			2		4	1
Central Portland	XX			2	1	9	1
Clackamas	XX			3		9	1
Coos Bay			XX		1	2	
Corvallis			XX	1		3	
Dallas			XX			1	
East Portland	XX			2	3	9	1
Gold Beach			XX	1			
Grants Pass			XX		1	3	
Hermiston			XX	1		1	
Klamath Falls			XX	1		2	
La Grande			XX	1		1	
Marion/Polk	XX			5	1	8	1
McMinnville			XX	2		4	
Medford	XX			2	1	6	1
Newberg			XX	2		1	
Newport			XX	1		2	
North Portland	XX			2	2	8	1
North Salem	XX			3		7	1
Ontario			XX	2		2	
Pendleton			XX		1	2	
East Springfield	XX			2	1	6	1
Roseburg	XX			1	1	3	1
Salem Rehab Hospital						1	
Santiam Center			XX			1	
St. Helens			XX			1	
Tillamook			XX	1		1	
The Dalles			XX	1		2	
Wash. County	XX			2	3	11	1
West Eugene	XX			3		9	1
Woodburn			XX			1	

2009 STATE PLAN UPDATE

Under the Rehabilitation Act, OVRs is required to annually update and submit its state plan for services to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the federal agency responsible for overseeing state vocational rehabilitation systems. The State Plan Update is both a report on the progress OVRs has made over the preceding federal fiscal year in fulfilling its program goals and priorities, and a plan and guiding document for the next federal fiscal year.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Planning process

This past year, OVRs and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) engaged in the comprehensive planning effort that takes place every three years. This effort included completion of a new triennial Comprehensive Needs Assessment (December 2007) and a new Consumer Satisfaction Survey (March 2008). The assessment and survey results, the preliminary findings of RSA's review of OVRs (February 2008), and the strategic plan of the Oregon Competitive Employment Project (February 2006), were used in developing the 2009 State Plan Update.

OVRs contracted with Program and Policy Insight (PPI), a public interest research and evaluation firm, to conduct its 2007 Comprehensive Needs Assessment. PPI's data collection and analysis were guided by the following questions in relation to the following areas:

Consumers' needs and barriers

- What are the primary barriers to employment for OVRs consumers?
- What are consumers' service needs, including for rehabilitation services and extended services and supports?

OVRs service provision

- How can OVRs best support consumers' efforts to achieve positive employment outcomes?

Target population estimates

- What does the population eligible for OVRs services look like?

PPI obtained assessment input through:

- A mixed mode survey of current OVRs consumers;
- A Web-based survey of all OVRs staff;
- Interviews of 50 key partners and stakeholders;
- Analysis of various OVRs documents and disability prevalence data.

Based on the assessment results, PPI made a number of recommendations, including that OVRs take the following steps in relation to the following areas:

Barriers and service provision: overall OVRs consumers

- Continue to focus on connecting consumers with opportunities to improve job skills and obtain education/training.
- Increase employer and public education on the abilities of people with disabilities.
- Increase provision of, or access to, sustained follow-up services.

Barriers and service provision to: persons with most significant disabilities

- Include targeted information about working with persons with significant disabilities during employer outreach.
- Continue implementation of model programs, including Supported Employment and/or Return-to-Work programs.

Racial, ethnic, or cultural minority consumers

- Provide culturally responsive services.
- Ensure access to language-appropriate services.

Youth in Transition

- Continue to build stronger skill-building programs for youth.

Other strategies to support effective service provision

- Strengthen collaboration with all program partners and stakeholders.
- Support staff efforts to conduct job development and build employer relationships.
- Continue to support Oregon Competitive Employment Project activities and values

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act, the SRC periodically surveys persons with disabilities who have been served by or interacted with OVRs about their satisfaction with the agency. After reviewing the previous consumer survey (2005), SRC and OVRs decided to develop a new, more comprehensive survey, which would address both consumer satisfaction with OVRs services and customer service issues. An SRC - OVRs work-group subsequently met and provided Abacus, Inc., the firm selected to develop and administer the survey, with direction about the survey's content and format.

The new survey addressed five major categories:

- Communication and timeliness of services;
- Services leading to eligibility determination;
- Services leading to an individualized employment plan;
- Services provided in the plan;
- Overall satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services.

The survey was completed by 284 randomly selected persons, including:

- Individuals determined ineligible for OVRs services;
- Eligible individuals for whom an OVRs individualized plan for employment (IPE) had not yet been developed;
- Individuals whose cases were closed before development of an IPE
- Individuals whose OVRs cases were closed without employment;
- Individuals whose OVRs cases were closed with employment.

Approximately 70 percent of the individuals surveyed were highly satisfied with OVRs's services. Clients currently in plan and clients closed with employment reported the greatest satisfaction, while clients not yet in plan reported the least satisfaction.

For more information about 2008 Consumer Satisfaction Survey, including copies of the survey documents and results, go the SRC Web site at www.orsrc.org.

For copies of the survey in alternative formats, please contact the SRC (contact information can be found at the beginning of this report).

State Plan goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes

In developing the 2009 State Plan Update, OVRs opted to revise the plan's format and refine its goals and objectives. The plan now provides the five goals stated below. Each goal has associated objectives, strategies and outcome measures. The





outcomes link directly to the federal standards and indicators on which OVRs must report annually and align with RSA's draft strategic plan.

2009 Goals

OVRs' 2009 goals are to:

- Increase the number and quality as measured by wages, availability of benefits, number of hours worked and consumer satisfaction of employment outcomes for all OVRs consumers.
- Increase the number of youth who seek OVRs services and the number and quality of employment outcomes for this population.
- Engage employers in order to increase the number and quality of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.
- Continually improve the management of the program while ensuring compliance with appropriate laws, rules and policy.
- Ensure a highly trained workforce at every level of the organization.

The strategic planning process for developing the State Plan goals, objectives, strategies and

outcomes began with a review by OVRs management and SRC workgroup of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Consumer Satisfaction Survey and other relevant information, and consolidation of this information into broad goals. In turn, OVRs staff refined the goals and populated the plan with high-level objectives, strategies and outcomes. The SRC workgroup continued to review and validate management and staff planning work, providing input and feedback. At a subsequent SRC quarterly meeting, a draft of the plan was reviewed with the full SRC and additional feedback and input was obtained. The draft plan was then shared with the public through five public hearings and the OVRs Web site. Additional revisions were made and the proposed plan was submitted to RSA at end of July. RSA subsequently approved the plan with minor changes.

The 2009 State Plan Update, in its entirety, may be viewed and downloaded at OVRs Web site at: www.oregon.gov/DHS/vr/index.shtml. For copies of the plan in alternate formats, contact OVRs Administration (contact information may be found in the back of this report).

OREGON COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

OVRs continued to administer the Oregon Competitive Employment Project (CEP), a comprehensive, multi-year, system-change initiative intended to increase competitive employment of persons with disabilities by addressing systemic barriers to employment.

Background

In 2005, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded OVRs a four-year Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to develop and implement the Oregon Competitive Employment Project (CEP). Later that year, OVRs hired CEP staff and established a 25-member leadership council of disability, government and business leaders to guide and advise the project. CEP subsequently developed a strategic plan (A Blueprint for Change) for carrying itself out. CEP's present objectives are:

- Development and operation of a comprehensive and sustainable work incentives and benefits planning system, and refinement of work incentives;
- Expansion and refinement of evidence-based supported employment services;
- Development and implementation of a marketing campaign that promotes employment of persons with disabilities with employers;
- Promotion of youth transition services and supports;
- Development of employment-related transportation services and supports in areas where such do not exist, or are limited;
- Promotion of culturally diverse and competent services;

- Strengthening of peer mentoring supports and services.

2008 Activities

In 2008, CEP and OVRs carried out the following initiatives and activities.

- CEP initiated its statewide Work Incentives Network (WIN), in partnership with the State Independent Living Council (SILC), Oregon's Centers for Independent Living, Disability Rights Oregon and its Work Incentives Planning and Advocacy Project (WIPA). WIN provides persons with disabilities with information, referral and planning services on the use of federal and state benefits and work incentives in order to assist them in achieving their employment goals.
- WIN has since served more than 1,300 individuals and trained more than 600 disability professionals. WIN staff are required to complete an intensive course of training on work incentives and benefits and obtain related certification. In addition, they receive monthly training in keep abreast of changes to the work incentive and benefit programs.

WIN presently comprised of:

Five regional teams of work incentive coordinators and information-and-referral specialists. The coordinators and specialists are located around the state in five of Oregon's Centers for Independent Living:

- ▲ Central Oregon Resources for Independent Living in Bend;
- ▲ Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living in Ontario;
- ▲ Independent Abilities Center in Grants Pass;
- ▲ Independent Living Resources in Portland;

- ▲ Lane Independent Living Alliance in Eugene.
 - A state-level training, technical assistance and quality assurance coordinator. The coordinator works out of CEP at OVRS Administration in Salem.
 - An internet-based benefits planning tool.
 - A research and evaluation component.
- OVRS and CEP, in partnership with the Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH), the Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Division (SPD) and the Brain Injury Association of Oregon (BIAOR), continued to promote and seek to expand the availability of supported employment services to people with significant disabilities, including persons with psychiatric disabilities, persons with developmental disabilities and persons with brain injuries.
 - AMH, CEP and OVRS funded and worked with the Oregon Center for Excellence on evidence-based supported employment. The Center, which became operational in December 2007, provides leadership, training and technical assistance on supported employment to 14 of Oregon’s county-based mental health programs. To date:
 - ▲ Thirty-eight employment specialists in the participating mental health programs have been trained on evidence-based practices.
 - ▲ Twelve programs have achieved evidence-based fidelity ratings above 100.
 - ▲ More than 280 persons with serious mental illness have obtained jobs.
 - CEP continued to participate in the Supported Employment Leadership Initiative,

through which SPD is refining its capacity to provide supported employment, and participated in the division’s development of an “employment first” policy for persons with developmental disabilities.

- CEP, BIAOR, SPD, AMH and Oregon’s Medicaid authority continued to explore funding for persons with brain injuries. In addition, CEP sponsored and helped underwrite the 2008 Pacific Northwest Brain Injury Conference, which was attended by more than 400 persons.

For more on OVRS’ supported employment services, see 44.

- CEP continued to work closely with the Oregon Business Leadership Network in engaging Oregon businesses and employers in hiring, retaining and advancing people with disabilities.
- CEP’s continuing partnership with the Department of Transportation, Deschutes County and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council resulted in the expansion of on-demand transportation services and routes by the Cascades East Transit District of Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes counties, in order to increase the availability of employment-related transportation to persons with disabilities in those communities.

CEP also:

- Continued to provide funding for and co-sponsor the Oregon Parent Training Center and Department of Education’s annual statewide conference on transition. The conference was attended by more than 250 educators, case managers, mental health professionals, vocational rehabilitation counselors, persons with disabilities and family members.

- Continued to fund for the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities' person-centered planning training project for transition youth and their parents. More than 45 youth, family members and disability professionals, including vocational rehabilitation counselors, completed the training in 2008

TRANSITION SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Youth Transition Program

OVRs continued to operate the Youth Transition Program (YTP), through which the agency and its YTP partners provide a comprehensive array of services to high school youth with disabilities in order to prepare them for employment or career-related post-secondary education or training.

YTP is a collaborative effort involving OVRs, participating school districts and high schools around the state, the Department of Education and the University of Oregon. Since its inception in 1990, YTP has served more than 10,000 youth.

YTP services begin while a student is in high school, generally at age 17 or 18, and continue for at least one year after the student's completion of secondary school requirements or departure from school for other reasons. YTP provides funding for school district transition specialists, who work year-round with OVRs counselors to provide YTP students with:

- Individualized career and transition planning;
- Paid job training and assistance in securing employment or entering post-secondary education upon leaving the program;
- Follow-up services after program completion.

When a student is selected to participate in YTP, he or she is expected to work with an OVRs counselor to develop an individual plan for employment (IPE), which reflects the student's interests, strengths and abilities, and addresses the barriers to training or employment outcomes.

YTP outcomes

In Federal Fiscal Year 2007, YTP was operated in 114 high schools throughout Oregon. During this same time period, YTP services and supports were provided to 1,369 students with disabilities. Of these students:

- 1,259 were in vocational rehabilitation application status and 830 had individualized plans for employment (IPE).
- 915 were awarded a high school completion certificate.
- 78 percent of those who exited YTP were either employed in a post-secondary educational or training program or a combination of the two.
- 334 or 67 percent of the 502 who exited the program were employed upon exit and were working an average of 31.6 hours per week at an average wage of \$8.95 an hour.
- 339 youth continued to be employed 12 months later and were working an average of 32.7 hours a week at an average wage of \$9.89 an hour.
- At one year, 100 youth were in post-secondary training or education at an average of 22 hours per week.

These data are consistent with national studies demonstrating that youth who participate in a formal transition programs such as YTP have higher graduation rates, higher rates of employment, and higher wages than their peers.

Career Workforce Skills Training Project

For the past nine years, OVRs also has assisted persons with disabilities of all ages in transitioning to work through the Career Workforce Skills Training (CWST) project. This effort, originally known as the Occupational Skills Training/Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services partnership, provides OVRs clients with employment, occupation and professional skills training. Since 1998, more than 750 OVRs clients have participated in the CWST project.

CWST, like YTP, is a partnership. This collaborative effort currently involves:

- Three of Oregon's community colleges – Clackamas in the eastern Portland metropolitan area, Chemeketa in Salem, and Rogue in the Medford-Grants Pass area. The community colleges operate or administer the skills training programs in which OVRs clients participate.
- Community employers, who provide participating clients with employment opportunities.
- OVRs branches (in the areas corresponding to the three community colleges). VR counselors, in conjunction with community college staff and clients, work to identify client goals and plan client participation in CWST, coordinate provision of needed services and supports, and assist clients in obtaining employment.
- The University of Oregon, which provides the project with needed technical assistance, training and evaluation.

The purpose of the CWST Project is to assist OVRs clients with disabilities in acquiring the skills and experience they need to obtain and maintain employment. The project provides clients with individualized instruction for up to 12 months at a worksite, based on an occupation-specific curric-

ulum. They can earn college credits for work-site based training at an approved community training site. In addition, clients may take related college courses as a part of their CWST training. The project's "value added" services are particularly attractive to individuals who have difficulty learning in a traditional classroom-based environment.

CWST Project outcomes

At present, more than 200 clients are participating in the CWST project.

In FFY 2007, CWST project sites provided service and supports to 215 persons. As a result:

- 46 clients completed the program and obtained vocational certificates.
- 86 clients entered employment.
- 51 clients continued to be employed for at least 90 days.

Data collected from the three community colleges show that clients who were employed after 90 days worked an average of 34.6 hours per week and were earning an average of \$12.44 an hour. As this and other data illustrates, individuals who complete the CWST Project increase the likelihood they will be employed in jobs that meet their capabilities and will earn a wage in excess of the minimum wage.

Other YTP and CWST project developments

OVRs and its YTP and CWST Project partners engaged in a number of other noteworthy activities over the past year. These included:

- Development of a YTP and CWST Project Web site. The site (www.ytporegon.org) provides information on transition, YTP, CWST, special education and related services, research, training and links. The intended audience is school personnel, OVRs staff, youth and adults with disabilities and their parents and

supporters, as well as the general public. The Web site also is being used to transmit and report on YTP and CWST Project performance data.

- Provision of regional transition trainings. OVRs, the University of Oregon and the Department of Education recently provided a series of trainings to school and OVRs personnel and allied professionals in all regions of the state on recent changes made to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, modified diploma standards, and the transition and the vocational rehabilitation process.
- Continued representation and participation, through OVRs' YTP/CWST Project Coordinator, on the State Advisory Council for Special Education and its Transition Advisory Committee, and the Oregon Association of Vocational and Special Needs Personnel. In addition, the Department of Education and the University of Oregon continued to be represented on the State Rehabilitation Council, OVRs' policy making partner.
- Completion of a staff satisfaction survey on YTP. In the spring of 2008, school district sites and OVRs branch offices responsible for carrying out YTP were surveyed about their experiences and whether the program is meeting their expectations. The results indicate that YTP is seen as a positive program and a value-added service to school districts and OVRs offices.

Project ACCESS

In 2007, the Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded OVRs one of seven grants for model demonstration projects to improve the postsecondary and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. This five-year, \$2.8 million grant is being used by OVRs, the University of Oregon and five high schools in Lane County to develop and implement

Project ACCESS (Accelerated Career Counseling and Employment Support Services), a pilot for delivering transition services to students with disabilities earlier in their lives and in the academic process. The intent is to develop a model of transition planning and services that will better assist students with disabilities in transitioning to employment and secondary education.

In 2008, OVRs and its UO and high school partners began to implement Project Access. The University of Oregon is assisting OVRs and Project Access with data collection and analysis, curriculum development, and coordination between the OVRs field staff and high school special education staff that will be responsible for providing Project Access transition services. During the summer and fall of 2008, U of O and OVRs sponsored "academies" through which OVRs and high school staff responsible for Project Access developed the curriculum and the partnerships with one another that they will need to carry out the project.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Supported employment is a major and continuing OVRs endeavor. OVRs's evidence-based supported employment program provides opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive employment in integrated settings. It does this by providing the vocational rehabilitation services they need to obtain employment, and subsequently collaborating with allied human service programs to provide them with the supports they need to maintain employment.



Historically persons diagnosed with serious mental illness, persons with developmental disabilities and persons with acquired/traumatic brain injuries, faced greater challenges in obtaining competitive employment.

As a result of its supported employment program, OVRs provided supported employment services to 698 of these individuals in the period between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008. During this same period, 205 individuals who received supported employment services became competitively employed, and 385 individuals continued to participate in supported employment individualized plans for employment.

Significant OVRs supported employment initiatives and activities include:

- Maintaining local mental health – vocational rehabilitation staff teams that meet regularly to coordinate provision of evidence-based supported employment services.
- Collaborating with the Addictions and Mental Health Division to expand the availability of evidence-based supported employment through the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence for persons diagnosed with serious mental illness. The center, which AMH, OVRs and CEP started in 2007, provides leadership, training and technical assistance on individualized placement and support, a nationally-recognized, evidence-based supported employment practice supported by AMH and OVRs. In 2008, the center supported 14 county-based mental health programs in 12 counties throughout Oregon.
- Working with Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) and regional developmental disability (DD) brokerages to provide access to supported employment services, as required by the Staley settle-

ment. Local supported employment teams of DD brokerage and OVRs field staff statewide met regularly to exchange information, solve problems and coordinate local activities.

- Collaborating with ODDS and its stakeholders to develop an “Employment First” policy for persons with developmental disabilities, and working with ODDS on its State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) initiatives. The new employment first policy requires all providers of developmental disability services to address employment as a first service option. SELN is a consortium of 16 state developmental disability agencies, including ODDS, which are seeking to develop policies and practices that promote competitive employment of persons with developmental disabilities.
- Working with Teaching Research Institute/ Western Oregon University and the Brain Injury Association of Oregon to identify and provide innovative services to individuals with acquired and traumatic brain injuries

ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

Over the past year, OVRs refined and expanded its Enhancing Employment Outcomes (EEO) pilot project into a systemwide initiative through which all OVRs counseling staff and a number of allied professionals are being trained on EEO methodologies and provided with the technical assistance and support needed to hone and sustain their EEO-related skills.

EEO was developed by Employment Management Professionals (EMP) and T3Associates (T3A), under contract with OVRs. It is based on the use of a nationally recognized set of integrated counseling strategies. These strategies are intended to:

- Assist counselors in motivating clients to work and understanding and making those lifestyle changes necessary to achieve and maintain employment, as clients transition from home to work;
- Increase counselor knowledge of job market penetration, increase employer retention of clients and increase the number of employers interested in hiring clients and willing to hire them;
- Provide counselors with practical and advanced methods of developing and maintaining relationships with employers that result in better outcomes for clients.

EEO was prompted by an organizational assessment in 2005 and begun as a pilot project in 2006. By the pilot's completion in June 2007, 40 OVRs counselors and branch managers had undergone EEO training and were using EEO methods. An evaluation of the pilot found it highly useful in obtaining positive employment outcomes for OVRs clients. OVRs subsequently made plans to expand the pilot to all OVRs branches and counseling staff.

By early 2008, an EEO project manager was appointed, an implementation team and work groups assembled, a cadre of mentors established and an implementation plan completed. Over the ensuing year, EEO consultants Alan Anderson of EMP and Liz Fabiano of T3A and the project manager, implementation team, work groups and mentors have conducted 40 EEO-related training events, provided ongoing technical assistance and support to the OVRs counseling staff and others who have completed the formal trainings, and engaged in other activities needed to roll out the EEO initiative statewide.

Most of the OVRs counseling staff have now completed T3A's basic and enhanced motivational

intervention training. In addition, many OVRs counselors, and a number of OVRs's contract job developers and allied professionals have completed EMP's foundational and advanced job marketing trainings.

The EEO initiative continues through 2010. It will continue to provide motivational intervention and job marketing training, and to use mentors to provide OVRs staff and others with post-training technical assistance and support. OVRs is training EEO trainers in anticipation of the end its contractual relationships with EMP and T3A after the initiative ends. In addition, OVRs management and the EEO project manager and implementation team are addressing a number of programmatic issues in order to take full advantage of EEO and increase employment of OVRs clients. For instance, OVRs has developed and is now seeking to fill a staff position that will work with OVRs branches and field staff, employers and job developers to refine the agency's job development efforts, based on the EEO approach.

Disability Program Navigator initiative

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative is a federally funded program sponsored by the Department of Labor through a grant awarded to the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. Although DPN funding has been uncertain in recent years, funding for Oregon's DPN initiative has been extended through June 30, 2009.

Nine workforce regions, covering 16 Oregon counties, currently have funded disability program navigator positions. These include:

- Region 2 - Multnomah and Washington counties
- Region 3 - Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties
- Region 4 - Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties

- Region 5 - Lane County
- Region 8 - Jackson and Josephine counties
- Region 10 - Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties
- Region 11 - Klamath and Lake counties
- Region 12 - Umatilla and Morrow counties
- Region 14 - Malheur, Harney and Grant counties

The disability program navigators have continued to facilitate universal access to services within Oregon's one-stop delivery system through

disability awareness, education, systems change and economic balance.

INDEPENDENT LIVING ALLIANCE

OVRs, the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Oregon Centers for Independent Living (CILs) continued their collaborative efforts to coordinate services, engage in cross-education and develop and carry out special projects that enhance the capacity of OVRs field offices and local independent living programs. On a related basis, OVRs and SILC continued to leverage state and federal funds to provide consumers with greater access to the independent living services and supports provided through Oregon's eight CILs.

OVRs and Oregon's independent living system are committed to fulfilling the Rehabilitation Act's requirement to conduct innovative and collaborative efforts to enhance the services of both

the vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living (IL) systems. As a result, the two systems are eliminating duplicative efforts and working to use their resources more effectively. Clients are benefiting from this more holistic approach to services. And CIL pre- and post-employment services are assisting OVRs in fulfilling its employment mission and the VR and IL systems in assisting individuals with disabilities in living independent lives.

EMPLOYER AND BUSINESS OUTREACH

OVRs held and sponsored numerous employer and business outreach and engagement initiatives and activities in 2008. These are described below.

Oregon Business Leadership Network

OVRs continued its partnership with and provision of grant support to the Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN), a business-led initiative to enhance and promote employment and inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. Noteworthy 2008 OBLN activities included:

- Provision of employer-engagement services

Over the past year, OBLN:

- Recruited six businesses for its summer internship and summer hire center and, in conjunction with Incight, Inc., its internship center partner, prepped seven college and high school students for participation in the center.
- Hosted four quarterly business forums that were attended by more than 40 businesses and which addressed topics including the ADA, diversity and disability, internship as a best practice, and job accommodations.
- Expanded its Web site, www.obln.org, to provide more information about employ-



ing people with disabilities, and continued to publish its monthly electronic magazine, which showcases businesses that hire and retain people with disabilities. The e-magazine's readership has more than doubled since 2007.

- Began a webinar training series on diversity and inclusion with national diversity expert Steve Hanmura. To date, over 50 businesses have participated in the webinar.
- Planned and hosted its second annual career and job fair in Portland in October. Ten local corporations and seven national corporations participated and more than 250 students and job seekers with disabilities attended the fair.
- Helped to plan and then hosted the United States Business Leadership Network's (USBLN) annual national conference, which was held in Portland on October 5 – 8. More than 340 guests from national corporations, local businesses and other companies and organizations attended more than 200 breakout workshops and 12 plenary sessions on a variety of topics on "Expanding Inclusion: The Business Strategy." It was the largest and most successful conference the USBLN has had since its inception nine years ago.
- OBLN continued to support and grow its Salem OBLN chapter. More than 40 state agencies and businesses participate in the chapter's bi-monthly meetings. Earlier in the year, the chapter hosted a Salem Chamber of Commerce greeter meeting where more than 200 businesses viewed CEP and OBLN's Look At My Ability video, which promotes employment of persons with disabilities.
- The Salem OBLN chapter partnered with OVRs to pilot a "Live Resumé/Diversity Job

Networking" event, at which OVRs clients presented their resumes "live" to employers with job openings, and subsequently the clients and employers had the opportunity to interact with one another one-on-one.

- The Salem OBLN has become a member of the Salem Chamber of Commerce. Its active participation in chamber functions has fostered recognition of the chapter and assisted it in marketing chapter meetings and functions.
- Development of business and strategic plans.
- OBLN's board of directors and executive director developed and adopted a business plan and three-year strategic plan in order that OBLN may become self-sustaining enterprise.

OVRs employer liaison

OVRs Employer Services Coordinator continued to represent OVRs in its interactions with Oregon's businesses and employers and inform and educate them about OVRs and employment of persons with disabilities.

- In 2008, the coordinator, often in partnership with OBLN and her counterpart at the Oregon Commission for the Blind:
- Made presentations and provided disability awareness and etiquette training to businesses, employers, and other groups;
 - 75 employees of the Marriott Hotel in Portland;
 - The annual state conference of the Oregon Employer Council; and
 - Department of Human Services managers and staff members.
- Designed and implemented quarterly "Live Resumé/Diversity Job Networking" events. This joint OVRs-OBLN initiative included working with OVRs counselors to identify interested job

seekers and preparing them for participation in Live Resume.

- Developed and facilitated links among local workforce development offices, apprenticeship programs and OVRS field offices.
- Participated in the Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Network (VR-NET), through which the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation is engaging national and regional employers – including Walgreen’s, Internal Revenue Services (IRS) and Veterans Administration – to increase hiring and retention of persons with disabilities.
- Represented OVRS with state and local employer councils and by serving on the USBLN 2008 national conference planning committee, a career and job fair planning committee and EEO project employer engagement workgroup.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION PREFERRED WORKER PROGRAM

In July, OVRS renewed its 18-month interagency agreement with the Workers’ Compensation Division (WCD) for targeting and assisting Preferred Worker Program (PWP) cardholders in Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah and Washington counties. WCD/PWP is a workers’ compensation program that provides benefits and incentives to injured workers and employers to facilitate re-employment of the workers.

Under the Preferred Worker Program, OVRS contacts eligible individuals and offers to fast-track them for vocational rehabilitation services and streamline their access to benefits. Thirty-one individuals in the program have

been re-employed since the new agreement was completed.

In December, OVRS and WCD expanded the program to Salem. Expansion to other areas of the state in the future is possible

REHABILITATION TRAINING

Annual In-Service Conference

In August 2008, OVRS, the Oregon Commission for the Blind, the Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN) and the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation Counseling at Western Washington University (Region X RCEP) organized and hosted a successful two-day statewide in-service conference in Salem. The conference offered participants an array of educational opportunities included in 34 breakout sessions. It drew more than 275 vocational rehabilitation professionals from around the state, including most OVRS staff. This year’s theme was “Working Smart.”

Much of the in-service conference focused on finding ways to work smart, improve employment outcomes and work successfully with individuals with mental health issues:

- Keynote speaker Miguel Valenciano, an international diversity trainer, addressed diversity and mental health.
- Crystal McMahon and Sandy Reese, co-directors of the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence, provided OVRS branch managers with an overview of the Center and the training and technical assistance it provides on evidence-based supported employment to persons with serious mental illness. They also discussed how the Center is working with community mental health programs and OVRS to expand the availability of supported employment.



- A special plenary session on the ADA and OVRs, titled “When Clients Complain . . .,” was facilitated by Mark Masthoff, OVRs Dispute Resolution Coordinator; Sherri Rita, OVRs Policy Analyst; Neisha Saxena, Disability Rights Oregon/Client Assistance Program attorney; and Lori Nelson of the DHS Governor’s Advocacy Office. Rita and Saxena conducted a follow-up session to address specific ADA issues and questions.
- Elizabeth Fabiano and Allen Anderson, OVRs consultants on the Enhancing Employment Outcomes project, returned to this year’s conference with dynamic presentations on employer engagement and client motivation.

Concurrent with the statewide conference, the Salem chapter of OBLN hosted an employer forum. Guest speakers from local businesses spoke about how businesses with recruitment challenges can meet their needs by hiring people with disabilities, and good hiring and retention practices. In addition, OBLN and OVRs’s employer services coordinator organized a “live resumé” event at which participating persons with disabilities made presentations to prospective employers.

Collaboration with Rehabilitation Counselor Education Programs

OVRs has long partnered with graduate rehabilitation counseling programs in the region. In 2008, OVRs continued to provide stipends for program interns. In addition, OVRs and the Oregon Commission for the Blind collaborated with their partners in Washington, Idaho and Utah in conducting an educational forum to address their pre-service and in-service training needs, as well as the shortage of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors.

TICKET TO WORK

OVRs continued to participate in Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Ticket to Work (TTW) and Cost Reimbursement programs.

Through TTW, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients have a choice of employment providers and services to help them obtain employment. Under SSA’s related cost reimbursement program, state vocational rehabilitation systems and other qualified providers, designated by SSA as “employment networks,,” may be reimbursed by SSA for the cost of providing vocational rehabilitation and related services to SSDI and SSI recipients for whom employment is a goal.

Earlier this year, SSA revised its TTW regulations in order to increase use of the Ticket to Work program. OVRs then began talks with DHS and DHS divisions about the opportunities to partner with OVRs to employ more SSDI and SSI recipients. OVRs will be working with DHS over the coming year to take advantage of those opportunities.

Over the past two years, OVRs also has refined its capacity to identify and process TTW claims, and has significantly increased its TTW revenue.



WORKFORCE COORDINATION

In 2008, OVRs continued to participate as a full partner in all resource sharing agreements that cover each of the state's 15 regional WorkSource Oregon (WSO) areas. A state-level team of technical assistants and trainers provided operational guidance for all mandatory partner programs implementing cost allocation and resource sharing agreements. The team comprises of representatives from the Oregon Employment Department (OED), the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Department of Human Services TANF program and OVRs.

In addition, WSO partners – including OED, CCWD, Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and Workforce Investment Act Title 1B (WIA Title 1B) providers – began to implement an integrated service system. To assist in this transition, OVRs tentatively agreed to extend the 2007-08 Resource Sharing Agreements (RSAs) among the WSO partners through December 31, 2008.

For more information about any of these rules and policies, contact OVRs Administration. OVRs contact information can be found in the front of this report.

RULE AND POLICY CHANGES

Over the past year, OVRs amended the rules and policies summarized below. These changes were made in consultation and collaboration with SRC, as OVRs's policy partner.

- The application rules, policy and process were amended to clarify when prospective clients complete the application process and the 60-day period for determining their eligibility begins.
- The client travel expenses rules were amended to standardize the rates for paying client travel expenses.
- The client as vendor rules were amended to prohibit clients from being OVRs vendors while receiving services (in order to prevent conflicts of interest).
- The contested case notice rules were amended incorporate changes made by a new state law.
- The rules defining the terms rehabilitation training and vocational rehabilitation training were amended to conform to a new statutory definitions.
- The Pell grant rules were amended to conform to related provisions in the Rehabilitation Act and federal rules.
- The public records fee rules were amended to authorize the charging of fees for copying and providing public records, in accordance with the requirement of a new DHS rule. The OVRs rule change provides a waiver for materials provided to clients and client representatives.
- The qualified personnel rules were amended to require that individuals who evaluate clients be qualified to perform those evaluations.
- The vehicle modification rules were amended to provide an exception to rule when necessitated by client circumstances.
- The procedures and forms for client grievances were amended to address legislated due process requirements effective January 2008.

OVRs met with the SRC to review the current Order of Selection policy in anticipation of invoking an Order in January 2009. A State Plan amendment was developed and revised by the SRC in support of this decision.

OREGON STATEWIDE DISABILITY SUMMARY

Disability impairment	Primary disability		Secondary disability	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Blindness	56	0.3	30	0.3
Cognitive Impairments	4,049	23.8	1,832	16.7
Communicative Impairments	217	1.3	142	1.3
Deaf-Blindness	7	0.04	3	0.0
Deafness, Communication Auditory	191	1.1	35	0.3
Deafness, Communication Visual	307	1.8	11	0.1
General Physical Debilitation	825	4.9	580	5.3
Hearing Loss, Communica- tion Auditory	421	2.5	129	1.2
Hearing Loss, Communica- tion Visual	46	0.3	6	0.1
Manipulation	360	2.1	262	3.3
Mobility	751	4.4	360	3.3
Mobility And Manipulation	734	4.3	269	2.5
Other Hearing Impairments	21	0.1	19	0.2
Mental Impairments	2,491	14.7	1,952	17.8
Orthopedic Impairments	1,318	7.7	658	6.0
Physical Impairments	2,218	13	1,748	16.0
Other Visual Impairments	78	0.5	129	1.2
Psychosocial Impairments	2,797	16.4	2,665	24.3
Respiratory Impairments	103	0.6	119	1.1
Total caseload served	16,991	100	10,949	100

Federal Fiscal Year 2008 (10/1/2007 through 9/30/2008)

FY 2008 CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Many individuals served by OVRS have multiple disabilities.

AGE	Frequency	Percent
Under 20	1,141	7
20 to 29	3,334	20
30 to 39	2,921	18
40 to 49	4,339	26
50 to 59	3,707	23
60 Plus	1,024	6
Total	16,466	100

GENDER	Frequency	Percent
Male	8,755	53
Female	7,716	47
Total	16,471	100

ETHNICITY ONLY	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaskan Native	713	4.0
Black	224	1.3
Asian	837	4.7
Hispanic or Latino	955	5.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	110	0.6
White	14,984	84.1
Total	17,823	100

EDUCATION	Frequency	Percent
No formal schooling	39	0.2
Special Ed (completion or attendance)	910	.5.5
Elementary education (grades 1-8)	522	3.1
Secondary education, no HS diploma	2698	16.2
Certificate	0	0.0
Post-secondary education, no degree	3234	19.5
AA degree or VoTec Certificate	1406	8.5
Bachelor's degree	1070	6.4
Master's degree or higher	321	1.9
Total	16,623	100

FY 2008 CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

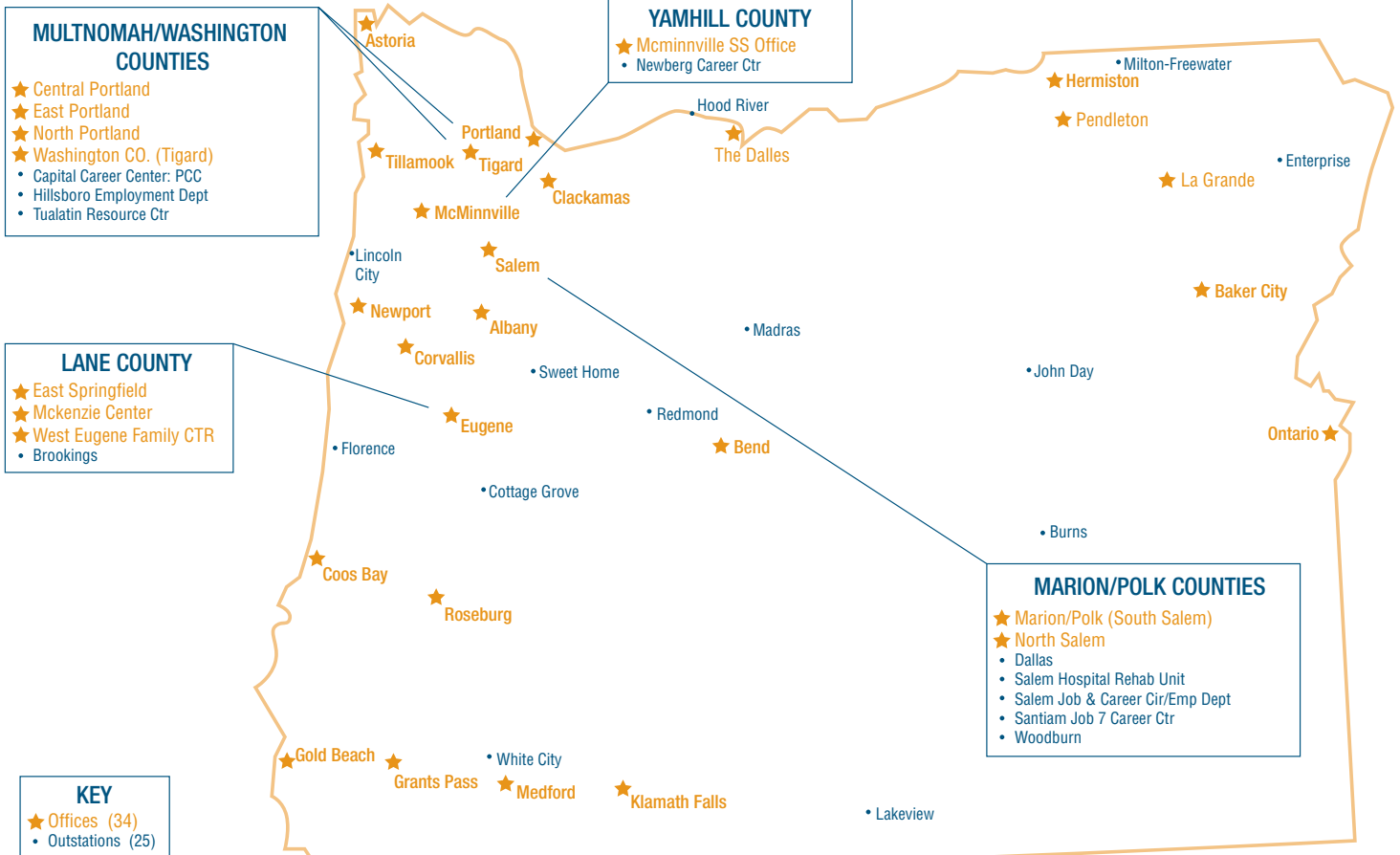
Applicants can choose to be counted under more than one ethnic group.

RACE and ETHNICITY	Percent
Non-Hispanic and White	84.1
Hispanic and Non-White	15.9
Total	100.0

COUNTY	Count	COUNTY	Count
Benton	470	Lane	1,609
Clackamas	1,393	Lincoln	284
Clatsop	137	Linn	702
Columbia	276	Malheur	175
Coos	324	Marion	1,751
Crook	74	Morrow	16
Curry	86	Multnomah	3,537
Deschutes	500	Out of State	1
Douglas	396	Polk	319
Gilliam	7	Sherman	9
Grant	38	Tillamook	148
Harney	42	Umatilla	290
Hood River	67	Union	138
Jackson	833	Wallowa	18
Jefferson	84	Wasco	113
Josephine	310	Washington	1,282
Klamath	210	Wheeler	3
Lake	15	Yamhill	640
Total	16,508		

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Kim Garrett – Branch Manager

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Kim Garrett – Branch Manager

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Brian Campbell – Branch Manager



**2007 COMPREHENSIVE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**



OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



2007 COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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2007 Comprehensive Needs Assessment for the Oregon Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

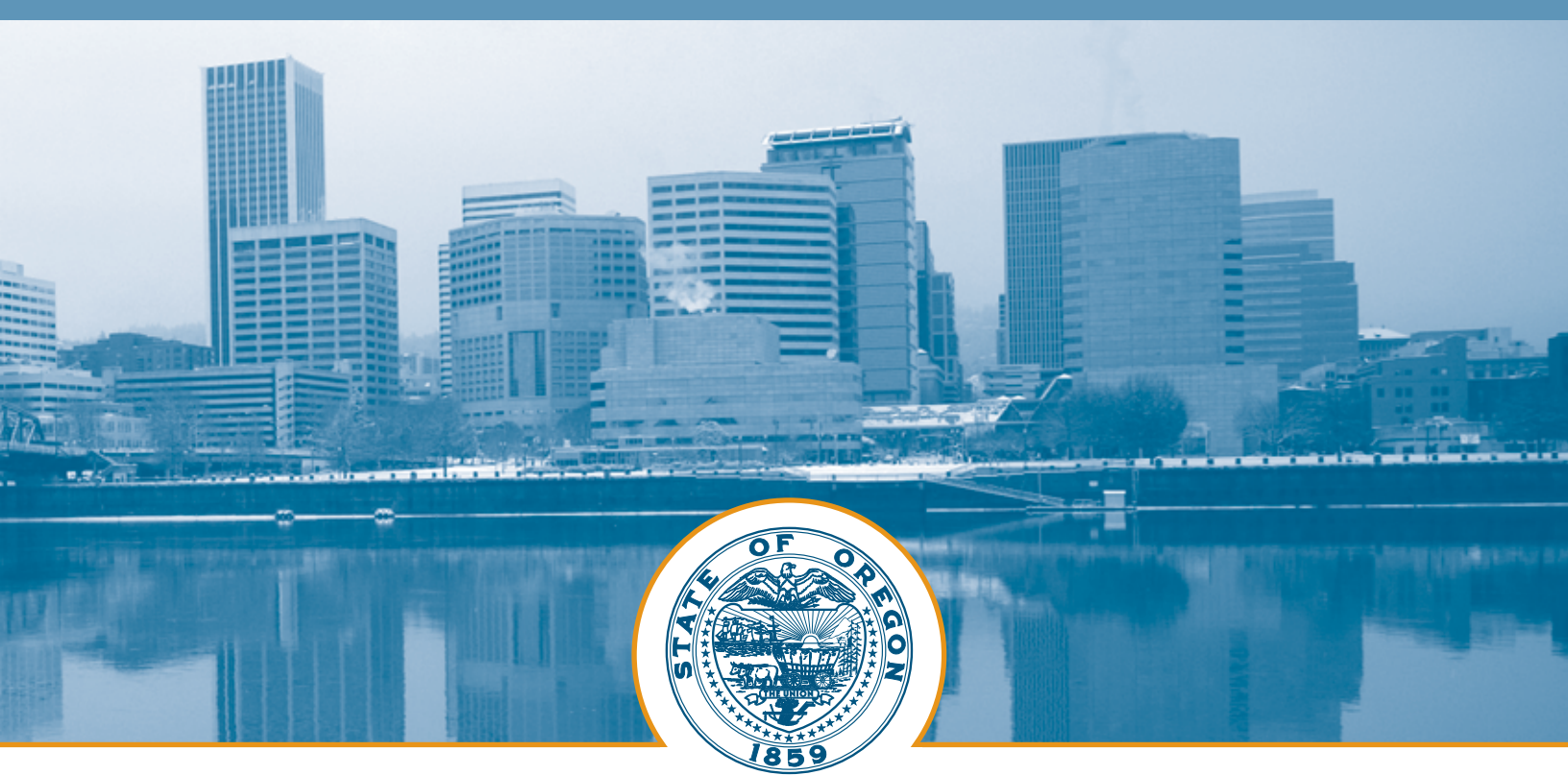
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) is responsible for Oregon's general vocational rehabilitation program. OVRs hired Program and Policy Insight, LLC (PPI) to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that will provide information and recommendations about the vocational rehabilitation needs of Oregonians with disabilities.

PPI worked with OVRs staff, as well as with members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to develop a framework and activities related to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The SRC is a Governor appointed body that serves as a policy partner with the public vocational rehabilitation program. The SRC has legislated responsibilities that include surveying customer satisfaction, developing an annual report, and participating in the development of the state plan.

OVRs has several ongoing initiatives, including the Competitive Employment Project, aimed to improve services for OVRs consumers. The Competitive Employment Project (CEP) developed a strategic plan, built on the input of a broad base of stakeholders, to increase the employment outcomes of individuals with the most significant disabilities. The results of the Comprehensive



Needs Assessment are expected to help formulate vocational rehabilitation policy, identify potential changes to services, and inform development of OVRS' 2009 State Plan for services and supports. Where appropriate, this report highlights findings that are similar to those found in other OVRS efforts, including the CEP, to improve outcomes for OVRS consumers.

In this executive summary, we first describe how we completed the needs assessment. We then highlight key findings related to OVRS consumers overall, selected groups of interest, and estimates of persons with disabilities. We then provide key recommendations based on Comprehensive Needs Assessment findings, related to both service provision and future needs assessments. More detailed information on findings and recommendations is included in the full report and appendices.

II. METHODOLOGY

The following key research questions guided the comprehensive needs assessment:

- Consumer needs and barriers: What are the primary barriers to employment for OVRs consumers, and what are their service needs?
- OVRs service provision: How can OVRs services best support positive employment outcomes for consumers?
- Target population estimates: What does the OVRs target population look like?

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment used multiple data sources, including a survey of current OVRs consumers, a web-based survey of OVRs staff, telephone interviews with other key stakeholders, and analysis of existing disability data and OVRs documents.

III. BARRIERS AND SERVICE NEEDS: OVERALL POPULATION

This section provides key findings related to consumer barriers to employment and service needs for the overall consumer population.

- A majority of consumers identified two barriers to employment: “not having enough job skills or the wrong kinds of skills” and “not having enough education or training”. Most OVRs staff members believe that services to address these barriers are available, and most OVRs consumers who faced these barriers noted that they have received or are receiving OVRs services to address these barriers.
- Many consumers, most OVRs staff and most stakeholders identified employers’ negative perceptions about people with disabilities as a key barrier to employment. Interviews with

employers suggest that OVRs does not have a strong relationship with employers, and that more outreach to employers, such as regular OVRs presentations at partner agencies and employer associations, could help develop these connections.

- The majority of all OVRs staff identified all possible items as barriers to employment for persons with disabilities, which suggests that OVRs staff work with a variety of consumers and are familiar with the types of barriers consumers face.
- “Disability-related transportation issues,” “mental health issues,” and “inadequate job-search skills” were cited as barriers by the greatest number of OVRs staff members. In contrast, these items were cited as barriers to employment by less than half of OVRs consumers.
- Consumer and staff responses indicate that some consumers face additional barriers to employment that require access to supportive programs beyond the responsibility of OVRs services. For example, in response to a question about the primary barrier to employment, “other health issues” was the most frequent response, cited by just under one-quarter of consumers. Stakeholders also suggested that health issues and access to on-going medical treatment can be a major barrier for some consumers.
- For all items related to accessibility challenges, the majority of OVRs consumers indicated that they have not experienced challenges to accessing OVRs services. However, small groups of OVRs consumers (fewer than one-quarter of consumers), as well as staff, noted challenges related to completing the OVRs application and Individualized Employment

Plan. OVRs may need to provide additional outreach and assistance in completing these forms.

- The majority of OVRs staff indicated that vendors are able to meet OVRs consumer vocational rehabilitation needs.
- Various stakeholder groups and staff noted limited follow-up services available through OVRs and noted a need for longer-term, frequent post-placement follow-up; this may be achieved through stronger partnerships with agencies that can provide these services.
- In response to a request for suggested changes, the largest group of consumer responses (more than one-third of consumers) indicated that no changes to OVRs service provision were needed.
- Findings related to the barriers and service needs for the overall population were aligned with selected key issue areas and values in Competitive Employment Project documents.

IV. BARRIERS AND SERVICE NEEDS: SELECTED TARGET POPULATIONS

This section provides key findings related to consumer barriers to employment and service needs for selected target populations, including:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds
- Youth in transition from high schools

Individuals with the most significant disabilities

- OVRs consumers with the most significant disabilities identified similar barriers to em-

ployment as OVRs consumers overall. Barriers cited by the largest number of consumers with the most significant disabilities included “not enough, or the wrong kinds, of job skills”, “not enough education or training”, and employer perception about working with individuals with disabilities.

- OVRs consumers with significant disabilities were more likely than other OVRs consumers to identify “disability-related personal care” and “housing issues” as barriers to employment. However, each of these barriers was identified by less than one-third of consumers with the most significant disabilities. Responses for other barrier-related items were similar to responses from other OVRs consumers.
- Similar to the overall population, a majority of OVRs staff identified “mental health issues” as a top barrier for this group. Less than half of consumer respondents with the most significant disabilities identified this issue as a barrier.
- Relevant stakeholder groups suggested that although the general barriers to employment are similar for people with significant disabilities, individuals from the group might face more barriers to employment and/or their disabilities might be more severe and the resulting barriers harder to overcome. Consumers with significant disabilities may require more innovative job development and training approaches to obtain employment, and OVRs may need to discuss working with persons



with significant disabilities, in specific, when promoting OVRs services to employers.

- Similar to the overall population, no item related to accessibility challenges was cited by more than one-quarter of individuals with most significant disability, which suggests that OVRs is addressing potential accessibility challenges for this group.
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities were significantly more likely to cite “completing the IEP” as a barrier to employment than other consumers. However, less than one-quarter of consumers with the most significant disabilities cited this item as a challenge to accessibility.
- Findings related to the barriers and service needs for individuals with the most significant disabilities were aligned with selected key issue areas and values in Competitive Employment Project documents.

Racial/ethnic minorities

- Similar to OVRs consumers overall, the top two barriers to employment, each cited by the most OVRs racial/ethnic minority consumers, were related to not having enough or the wrong kinds of job skills, and not have enough education or training.
- In comparison with non-minority consumers, only one barrier shows a significant difference between these two groups. “Language issue” was noted as a barrier by more minority consumer than non-minority consumers. While this item was cited by less than one-third of

minority consumers, most OVRs staff indicated that language barriers are a primary barrier to accessing or receiving OVRs for minority consumers. In addition, several stakeholders across groups indicated that hearing impaired consumers are a cultural minority that may face similar language barriers to employment or services.

- Similar to the overall population, all items representing challenges to accessibility were noted by less than one-third of the minority consumer population, suggesting that OVRs has addressed many potential challenges to accessibility.
- Stakeholders noted that cultural differences regarding disabilities, work expectations and trust of service agencies have not been fully explored by OVRs. These findings suggest a need for targeted training across OVRs staff to increase cultural literacy and awareness.
- Findings related to the barriers and service needs for racial/ethnic minorities were aligned with one of the key issue areas identified by Competitive Employment Project documents.

Youth in transition

- The top two barriers (cited by the largest percentage of youth consumers), “not enough jobs available” and “other transportation issues” differ from those cited by the overall population. The third ranked barrier, “not enough or wrong kinds of job skills” reflects key barriers suggested by the overall population. Each of these barriers was cited by less than half of youth consumers.
- For almost half of the barrier-related items, youth consumers were significantly less likely to identify the item as a barrier to employment than were non-youth consumers.



- OVRs staff identified skill- and education-related barriers as the primary barriers to employment for youth. Less than one-third of youth consumers identified these barriers. This result may reflect a larger pattern of fewer youth consumers identifying barriers to employment. However, it may also stem from youth's lack of experience with workplace expectations, or counselor limitations in identifying non-traditional workplace skills.
- Although "other transportation issues" was one of the top barriers to employment cited by youth, less than one-quarter of staff members identified this issue as a top barrier for youth consumers. Several OVRs administration and SRC stakeholders noted that transportation is a particular challenge for youth who may not have access to their own vehicles and may instead rely on limited or non-existent public transportation systems, suggesting that youth transition programs may need to focus additional efforts on assisting youth to identify transportation options or otherwise accessible employment opportunities.
- Similar to the overall population, all items representing challenges to accessibility were noted by less than one-third of the youth consumer population, suggesting that OVRs has addressed many potential challenges to accessibility. Despite findings regarding transportation as a perceived barrier to employment, very few youth cited public transportation as a challenge to accessing services.
- Stakeholder respondents suggested that the education system and the vocational rehabilitation system are not well aligned, resulting in inadequate coordination of resources between the systems, a lack of awareness about available OVRs services

and insufficient coordination of youth transition services and opportunities. Stakeholders suggested joint decision making about resource planning and responsibility, and improved outreach to education agencies to coordinate services across agencies.

- Findings related to the barriers and service needs for youth were aligned with one of the key issue areas identified by the Competitive Employment Project.

V. OTHER SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE PROVISION

This section describes key findings related to other supports for effective service provision.

- Several stakeholders noted that in general, OVRs partners well, and that partnerships are extremely important given the relatively small size of OVRs staff. They also noted the strength and effectiveness of local partnerships, but that collaboration across state-level partner agencies could be improved. Stakeholders suggested written agreements, formal communication plans, and greater joint representation on task forces as strategies to enhance partnerships.
- A majority of employers, stakeholder respondents, OVRs consumers, and OVRs staff agreed that greater employer and public education about the abilities of people with disabilities is critical to



creating job opportunities and career ladders. Employer stakeholders in particular encouraged more aggressive outreach to increase employer engagement and participation.

- Although most stakeholders felt that OVRS has done a relatively good job in providing continuing education opportunities for staff, they identified several areas for improvement:
- OVRS staff members in rural areas without higher education institutions may benefit from distance learning opportunities
- All OVRS staff could benefit from more training on specific service models or strategies, including the supported employment model, person-centered counseling, and communication related to mental health and substance abuse
- All staff could benefit from disability-specific training, such as developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and non-physical asset needs.
- Multiple stakeholders expressed very little or no connection with OVRS and felt unable to comment on many of the survey's questions. In particular, stakeholder responses suggest that OVRS has an opportunity to develop stronger partnerships with groups representing minorities, and devote additional resources, in collaboration with workforce partners, towards employer-education efforts on OVRS services and persons with disabilities.
- Findings related to other supports for effective service provision were aligned with values articulated by the Competitive Employment Project.

VI. TARGET POPULATION ESTIMATES

This section describes the OVRS estimated target consumer population for the state of Oregon, OVRS branch office service areas and selected target populations, and provides estimates related to the percentage of various target consumer populations served by OVRS.

State of Oregon

- Analysis of these data suggests that the percentage of Oregonians aged 16 to 64 who experience an employment disability may range from 8% to 17%. The employment gap, or the difference between the employment rates for persons with and without an employment disability, may range from 49% to 54%.
- Analysis of 2006 OPS and 2006 ACS data (employment disability measures) suggest that the target OVRS consumer population may be as large as 110,000.
- Comparison of the numbers served by OVRS and target population estimates indicates that OVRS is serving approximately 17% of the target consumer population.

OVRS Service areas

- Analysis of 2006 OPS data (employment disability measure) indicates that the percentage of Oregonians aged 16 to 64 who experience an Employment Disability varies considerably among branch office service areas, from a low of approximately 3% to a high of about 37%. The employment gap also varies among service areas, from a low of approximately 36% to a high of about 71%.
- Analysis of these data suggests that the OVRS target population for various branch office service areas may vary substantially, from

a low of approximately 6,000 to a high of about 28,000.

Selected target populations

- Analysis of 2006 ACS data (any disability measure) indicates that the racial/ethnic minority target population is small, with estimates indicating that all racial/ethnic minority groups (i.e., black, American Indian/Native Alaskan, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, other, and Hispanic) constitute fewer than 6,000. Hispanics represent the largest group with more than 5,700 individuals and Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders represent the smaller group with fewer than 100 individuals. For comparison, whites represent the largest group of consumers, with more than 100,000 estimated consumers.
- Comparison of target population estimates with consumers served by OVRS indicates that most racial/ethnic minority groups receive services equitably in comparison with non-minorities (i.e., whites). Black, American Indian/Native Alaskan, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, other, and Hispanic consumers are all served in larger proportions than whites, with Hispanics served in the largest percentage (over 50% of the target population served by OVRS). However, Asians may be underserved in comparison with whites and other racial/ethnic minority groups, with only 10% of the Asian target consumer population served by OVRS.
- Analysis of 2006 ACS data (any disability measure) suggests that the OVRS target youth population amounts to just under 50,000. Comparison of this estimate with numbers served indicates that OVRS is probably serving as much as 6% of the target population.

- Target population estimates for various other prospective OVRS consumer groups include: approximately 2,500 youth in transition who experience autism spectrum disorder; approximately 675 consumers who experienced a recent traumatic brain injury; and less than 55,000 consumers who experience a mental disability. The extent to which these estimates incorporate employment information varies by disability impairment.

VII. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment offers a rich source of information on the barriers and service needs of OVRS consumers from the perspective of consumers, staff members, and program stakeholders. This section provides recommendations to inform future service delivery, and is organized according to key report sections.

Most of these recommendations can be addressed through multiple short- and long-term action steps. However, those recommendations that will require substantial investment of resources (e.g., additional staff members) or systems change (e.g., development and coordination of multiple partnerships and systems) are more likely to be effectively addressed via comprehensive long-term strategies.



Barriers and service provisions: overall OVRs consumers

Continue to focus on connecting consumers with opportunities to improve job skills and obtain education/training. A majority of consumers noted insufficient or inadequate job skills and education/training as barriers to achieving employment goals. OVRs services are clearly aligned with these barriers, as the majority of consumers with those barriers noted that they are receiving helpful services to address the barriers. A majority of OVRs staff also indicated that job search and education services are readily available. OVRs should continue its focus on assisting consumers to address these barriers.

Increase employer and public education on the abilities of people with disabilities. The majority of employers, stakeholder respondents across groups, OVRs consumers, and OVRs staff agreed that greater employer and public education on the abilities of people with disabilities is critical to creating job opportunities and career ladders. Stakeholder respondents noted the need for proactive OVRs marketing and communication strategies, such as regular and sustained OVRs presentations at partner agencies and employer associations. Employer stakeholders also encouraged more aggressive outreach to increase employer engagement and participation.

Increase provision of or access to sustained follow-up services. Both stakeholders across groups and staff members noted a need for more sustained post-placement follow-up. Although long-term follow-up may be outside of OVRs responsibility, OVRs may wish to enhance greater connection with programs that can provide long-term support.

Continue efforts to maintain the accessibility and availability of OVRs services. For the overall population, all challenges to accessibility were cited by

less than one-quarter of consumer respondents. Although there may be localized areas where vendor services are insufficient, OVRs efforts to make services accessible to OVRs consumers have generally been successful. OVRs should continue to improve service access and vendor availability in target areas.

Improve efforts to ensure connections to other supportive services. For a broad range of supportive services, a majority of consumers (who are receiving or have received services from OVRs) cited that services received have not helped them address that barrier. Access to supportive programs beyond the responsibility of OVRs services depends in large part on the existing capacity of related service providers. Where supportive services are available, OVRs should continue to develop connections with supportive service agencies to improve access to these services.

Barriers and service provision: selected OVRs target populations

Persons with most significant disabilities

Include targeted information about working with persons with significant disabilities during employer outreach. In addition to a general need for greater public and employer outreach and education, stakeholders working with people with significant disabilities also suggest a specific need to discuss abilities of and accommodations for these consumers when promoting OVRs services to employers. In particular, stakeholder feedback stressed the need for OVRs staff to facilitate non-physical accommodations, such as flexible scheduling and frequent breaks, especially for individuals with specific disabilities.

Continue implementation of model programs to serve consumers with significant disabilities, including supported employment and/or return-to-work programs. Compared to individuals with



disabilities overall, OVRs administration, SRC members, and stakeholders working with individuals with significant disabilities indicated that these consumers may require more innovative job development, training approaches, and follow-up services to obtain and maintain employment. Stakeholders familiar with the needs of this group recommended continued implementation of supported employment and return-to-work programs, as well as person-centered planning, to help individuals with the most significant disabilities achieve their employment goals.

Racial, ethnic, or cultural minority consumers

Provide culturally responsive services. OVRs administration, SRC members, and stakeholders familiar with minority consumers indicated that OVRs service provision may not sufficiently implement cultural sensitivity and awareness when working with persons of racial, ethnic, or cultural

minorities. These stakeholders suggested that OVRs should more fully explore cultural differences regarding disabilities, work expectations, and distrust of service agencies; these differences may significantly affect consumers' motivation to seek services or employment. These findings suggest a need for targeted training across OVRs staff to increase cultural literacy and awareness.

Ensure access to language-appropriate services for ethnic and cultural minorities. Needs assessment findings suggest that there is a group of minority consumers who face language barriers that are not adequately addressed by OVRs services. In addition to ethnic minorities, several administration and SRC stakeholders indicated that hearing-impaired consumers comprise a cultural minority that may face comparable language barriers to employment or services. These language barriers suggest a need for targeted training or partnerships to increase access to non-English or

non-spoken language OVRs services, and for some consumers, a need for better access to targeted English language training programs.

Youth in transition

Continue to build stronger skill-building programs for youth. Consumer survey results revealed that all barriers to employment are cited by less than half of youth respondents. For multiple items, including insufficient job skills and insufficient/inadequate education, youth were significantly less likely to cite items as a barrier than non-youth respondents. This finding may simply reflect a larger pattern of fewer youth consumers identifying barriers to employment, as evidenced across barriers. However, this discrepancy may also stem from youth's lack of experience with realistic workplace expectations, or counselor limitations in identifying non-traditional workplace skills and employer demand. More programmatic efforts to connect youth in transition to skill-building programs and education/training opportunities may be appropriate.

Identify additional opportunities to help youth overcome barriers related to other transportation issues. Youth consumers identified other transportation issues (i.e., non-disability related transportation issues) as one of the primary barriers to achieving their employment goals. However, less than one-quarter of staff members identified this issue as a key barrier for

youth consumers. Several stakeholders noted that transportation is a particular challenge for youth who may not have access to their own vehicles and may instead rely on limited or non-existent public transportation systems, suggesting that youth transition programs may need to focus additional efforts on assisting youth to identify transportation options or otherwise accessible employment opportunities.

Multiple selected target populations

Apply recommendations from the overall population to selected target populations, remaining sensitive to potential differences. Findings for the overall populations resulting from the consumer and staff surveys were generally aligned with the findings for selected target populations, especially individuals with the most significant disabilities and racial/ethnic minorities, suggesting that selected recommendations for the overall population were applicable to selected target populations.

Other strategies to support effective service provision

Strengthen overall collaboration with all program partners. Although several stakeholders noted that OVRs partners well, other partnership feedback was varied. Effective collaboration with partner agencies is critical to OVRs success, and OVRs administration, SRC members, and allied program representatives suggested specific strategies for improvement, including formalized written agreements, institutionalized communication plans, greater joint representation on boards and task forces, and OVRs liaisons dedicated to specific agencies or specialized disabilities to streamline communication between partners.

Enhance partnerships with supportive service providers. Staff and consumer respondents



indicated that select support services (e.g., substance abuse, mental health, medical treatment, and housing) are not readily available. Although access to these services depends on the local capacity of supportive service providers, consumer and staff feedback suggests a need for enhanced partnerships with these agencies, where available, to ensure that OVRs consumers are aware of and access available support.

Improve partnerships with education agencies at the state and local level. OVRs administration, SRC members, and education-affiliated stakeholders described systemic differences between the education and vocational rehabilitation systems. They noted variance in eligibility criteria, lack of awareness of available services across agencies, and lack of proactive planning to transition youth from the structured school environment into the workforce or post-secondary pursuits. Stakeholders suggested joint policy guidance regarding resource planning and responsibility and improved outreach to education agencies to coordinate services across agencies.

Deepen partnerships with selected stakeholder groups. Multiple stakeholders, including racial and minority representatives and employers, expressed very little or no connection with OVRs and felt unable to comment on many of the survey's questions. OVRs should develop stronger partnerships with groups representing minorities, and devote additional resources, in collaboration with workforce partners, towards employer-education efforts on OVRs services and persons with disabilities. Deepening relationships with local workforce partners and other employer representation agencies could facilitate employer engagement.

Increase staff training in targeted areas. Most stakeholders felt that OVRs is relatively success-

ful with continuing education opportunities for staff, but identified several areas for improvement, including access to distance education for rural OVRs staff, enhanced training on specific models or strategies (such as supported employment model, person-centered counseling, and communication related to mental health and substance abuse) and targeted training on specific disabilities (such as developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injury).

Support staff efforts to conduct job development and build employer relationships. A majority of OVRs staff members indicated that more time for job development services is an important consumer-focused change. Stakeholder and employer feedback also indicated a need for improved training to help staff identify and develop jobs that are appropriate for consumers' abilities and interests.

It should be noted, however, that several staff provided strong feedback in the survey suggesting that job development should not be considered one of their job duties. It may be appropriate for OVRs to provide opportunities for self-selected staff to receive additional training related to job development and building employer relationships, or forge stronger connections with existing workforce development partners; these staff could serve as a resource to other OVRs counselors.



Continue to support activities related to key issue areas and values articulated by Competitive Employment Project. Many of the key findings and related recommendations stemming from this

Comprehensive Needs Assessment are aligned with priority issue areas and values identified in the Competitive Employment Outcomes Strategic Plan, suggesting that continued support for these activities would be appropriate.

Target population estimates

Continue to explore potential need for additional staffing and branch office locations in regions with larger employment gaps and/or employment population estimates. The percent of the population affected by an employment disability, and the related employment rates for these groups, varies considerably by branch office. These data provide important information on the overall distribution of the OVRs target population that should be considered in future staff allocation or resource distribution. It would also be appropriate to explore additional factors that may affect the employment gap experienced by selected branch office service areas and work with partner agencies to address those gaps.

Consider using a range of estimates for funding requests and/or staffing allocations, and continue to pursue sources of data related to disability severity. The analyses conducted during this Needs Assessment confirmed that target

population estimates vary substantially by data source and disability measure. It would be appropriate for OVRs to base estimates for funding requests or staffing allocations on a range of estimates, and continue to pursue additional estimates related to disability severity.

Identify and address barriers to employment faced by African-Americans/blacks. Target population estimates suggest that African-Americans/black individuals with disabilities in Oregon face a larger employment gap than other racial/ethnic minority groups. Efforts should be made to target improvements in employment outcomes for persons with disabilities who are African-Americans/black, potentially by targeting OVRs services, providing additional resources to branch offices who serve large numbers of African-American/black individuals, and/or educating staff about the challenges faced by this group.

Continue to focus efforts on serving racial/ethnic minority and non-minority consumers equitably. Examination of the percent of various racial/ethnic minority groups served by OVRs suggests that OVRs has made adequate efforts to ensure that most racial/ethnic minority groups receive services equitably in comparison with non-minorities (i.e., whites). However, the results of these analyses also indicate that Asians may be underserved in comparison with other racial/ethnic minority groups and in comparison with non-minorities.

Consider using OPS and ACS employment disability measures in future analyses. Target population estimates were highest for the OPS employment disability measure and OPS data can be aggregated by branch office service area. If resources permit, it would be useful to examine changes in the employment disability measure over time. It might also be useful to use national and state-level statistics for the ACS employment





disability measure as benchmarks for relative progress in Oregon.

Future OVRs needs assessment

Allow for more upfront planning activities. The expedited timeframe of the Current Needs Assessment required the various assessment activities (consumer survey, staff survey, and stakeholder interviews) to be conducted simultaneously. With a longer timeframe, exploratory discussions with stakeholders at the start of the project could inform, refine, and improve data collection instruments and processes.

Facilitate greater employer input. This assessment incorporated important feedback from multiple employer stakeholders; however, multiple employer respondents were either unavailable or expressed a concern that they were unfamiliar with OVRs and the needs of persons with disabilities. In future needs assessments, it may be useful to request that relevant OVRs partners, such as job development organizations or workforce investment boards, provide recommendations for employer respondents to increase the likelihood of gathering substantive feedback from employers.

Consider additional outcomes-related evaluation efforts that relate selected services to employment outcomes. The perceptions measured in this assessment provide critical information about needs, gaps, and targeted improvements. However, the design of the assessment did not provide information on the outcomes achieved by OVRs consumers, nor did it associate consumer outcomes with services received. It would be appropriate for OVRs to consider implementing an interim evaluation related to the effectiveness of OVRs services as measured by consumer outcomes. Focusing evaluation activities on specific programmatic efforts would be an efficient use of resources, and has greater potential of yielding more rigorous design and results.

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STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL QUARTERLY MEETINGS

February 6, 2009 – Salem/Keizer

May 1, 2009 – Salem/Keizer

July 31, 2009 – Hermiston

November 6, 2009 – Eugene

OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

2008 ANNUAL REPORT



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